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MUTTERINGS

AND

MUSINGS OF AN INVALID.

*By J. S. Taylor*

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OH DEAR, another miserable, worthless day before me. How long is this loathsome farce to last? How long am I doomed to drag this contemptible carcass about the earth? How many more weary months must I linger here, an eye-sore to my friends, a nuisance to myself? When, oh when, will the blessed day of release come, that I may go down quietly to my grave, and be resolved into my kindred dust? Why, why was I ever permitted to see day-light? What right had my unthinking parents to inflict upon society such a wretch as I am? Yes, 'twere far better for all concerned, that I were out of the way—the sooner the better—let me go then—box me up—pack me off—send me home—home, to my mother earth—without parade too—with as few vain words as possible—let me drop off, unheeded as a falling leaf. But some hale and hearty looking friend will enter presently,

picking his teeth, perhaps, after a substantial breakfast, and tell me that I am wrong, quite wrong, in feeling and talking thus—that it is ungrateful, sinful—that it is mere chicken-hearted whining—an unmanly shrinking from the wholesome trials, the needful discipline of life. Sir, I am not convinced—nor do I like the dictatorial tone of your remarks. Grumble I *will*—it is the sick man's privilege. I wish to know why I am tormented thus? What vile offence must my poor soul have committed in some pre-existent state, that it has thus been condemned to ignominious imprisonment in such a pitiful humbug of a body as this—look at me—what a lantern-jawed, guinea-visaged, hollow-eyed scarecrow have I become—a mere bag of sorry bones. Why, if I were cast ashore on a Cannibal island to-morrow, no respectable native would condescend to eat me. Were I in a den of lions, I should feel perfectly safe, *without* faith; they would scorn to lay their royal paws on such a paltry morsel. See that infernal, rascally, impertinent, truth-telling looking-glass; with what a quiet malice it confirms my statements—vile reminder of my wretchedness, let me dash it into ten thousand atoms—yes, let me hurl it at the head of that obstreperous wretch who is even now crying sand

under my windows—what a ragged, rugged looking dog he is—what a solid-legged, broad-backed, impudent scoundrel—such a pair of lungs, too. Now is it not too bad, that I should be penned up here, like a bit of wax-work in a museum, and that this noisy, unprincipled vagabond should be as free as air? Curse my unlucky stars!

Patience, patience, patience, my dear boy, think of poor old Job, and his patriarchal sufferings—studded with boils, tormented by a vixen of a wife, teased and insulted by hypocritical visitors—what are your experiences, compared with his? think of that, and so possess thy soul, and gulp down thy pills in patience.

Pills, forsooth! have I *not* been gulping them down continually, for the last quarter of a century? hundreds of thousands of them, of all sorts, sizes and denominations? Blue, Life, Health, Dinner, Assa-fœtida, Paradise Pills? I verily believe that I have tossed down more of these balls into my stomach, than there were votes polled at the last federal election—yes more than there were ever *confetti* thrown, at the gayest Carnival of Rome. I have no doubt that at this moment they are sticking about in the coats of my stomach, thicker than capers on a leg of mutton—pills, say you? ay, and

powders too—have I not swallowed powders enough to make a first-class sand-bank? Have I not swilled down saline and bitter draughts, enough to float the navy of Europe? name to me, if you can, a cough drop that I have not tried; a cough candy that I have not sucked—or any gum, paste, root, syrup, tincture, that has not crossed the threshold of my stomach—Wintergreen, Camomile, Valerian, Hoarhound, Liverwort, Sarsaparilla, have I not sued to them all in vain? Have I not bowed down and worshipped at the shrines, first of Allopathy, then of Homœopathy, and finally, of Hydropathy? Have I not all summer long been soaking in wet sheets, and tossing down multitudinous tumblers of Croton? Have I not crouched down in sitz baths of all temperatures? what part of my poor carcass has *not* been a target for the contents of douche-pipes of all calibers? and has it not turned out a sovereign, a stupendous humbug? Water-cure, forsooth! Why the first great water experiment of all, the Deluge itself, did not effect a cure; for who does not feel it, in his very bones, to be true, that the world is just as full of scamps, and quacks, and sots, and ruffians, as it was before the Flood? Well, well, well—let me compose myself—let me see if a cup of tea, and the morning paper cannot,

between them, bring me down to a more rational, Christian frame of mind. Heavens! what a monster sheet—it is really a job to fold it—why six irritable fellow-citizens might read abreast here, without any excuse for growling or hustling. If it keeps growing at this rate, the Times will soon be a mere chicken alongside of it; and as to those poor little starvelings that they call Journals in France, and Austria, and Italy, they sink into absolute nothingness. What says the editor? “We present to our readers,” &c., “unwieldy as it may seem, we assure them that it is quite too small to be a faithful mirror of the world’s doings, or an adequate exponent of the wants of our vast, momentarily growing, and ever dearly beloved Gotham”—you say truth, no doubt, most amiable of pen-wielders—the world’s doings, indeed—no trifle, they, in our day—how vast, how manifold! Has there *ever* before been such a stir and bustle in this planet of ours? Can it be, that our brethren in the other orbs of space are so full of business? if so, what an active, enterprising universe it must be. How proud we ought to be to belong to it! Why, *here* there is scarce a corner left for the meditative man—the philosopher can scarce find a quiet day, or quiet night, wherein to pursue his speculations; as for the poor poet, the

jig is clearly up with *him* ; he may as well hang his harp upon the willows forthwith, or take it to the nearest pawnbroker's shop—he must no longer

“Murmur near the running brooks  
A music sweeter than their own ;”—

both brook and poet are looked upon by the community with a jealous eye—the former must no longer be permitted to prattle and loiter amongst groves and meads, but must be cut short in its course, and pressed into the service of Mammon—as to the latter, let him take refuge instanter in peddling or book-keeping, if he would dodge the operation of the vagrant act—public opinion will not be trifled with—and public opinion hath voted “calm contemplation and poetic ease” to be intolerable nuisances, as much so, as intramural burying, or bone-boiling. Drop your books, then, my young friend—suspend your rambles—leave the lily on its stem, the Shakespeare on its shelf, and come and join the great congregation of Workers—come, help us plough and plant and sow and reap and dig and build and chop and spin and grind—fear not, there is work enough and to spare, for the whole of us—yes, for the whole nine hundred millions—see what herculean labors we are already engaged in, and have cut out for our

children and childrens' children—tapping lakes, cutting across isthmuses, scooping out harbors, putting rivers in trim for business, drilling holes through mountains, ransacking the bowels of the earth for gold and silver, undermining whole States for fuel, chasing whales from ocean to ocean, sending forth our packs of steam-hounds to scour the earth by sea and land, plucking out the heart of its mystery from either pole, holding wire-talks with the antipodes, turning the great globe itself into a huge whispering gallery—surely these are laudable, and most appropriate tasks for human wits and nerves—most true—but, meanwhile, are there no other departments of thought and action? Is theology to go by the boards? are metaphysics to be forgotten? are the higher mathematics to be abandoned to the angels? May we no longer chop logic as well as wood? are the flowers of rhetoric to wither on their stalks? Is jurisprudence to be deprived of her fair proportions? Is science only to be valued, as she may minister to our comfort? Is Art herself to forget all that is lofty and holy in her calling, and to become a mere turnspit in the service of Appetite? Heaven forbid—and yet, while we all cheerfully admit, in theory, the supremacy of things spiritual, are we not devoting the great mass of our time, thought, and

means to things material? turning our back upon the substance, while chasing the teasing, deceiving, and tormenting shadow? But I forget myself—what business has a poor cripple, like me, to indulge in these vain speculations? Has not the doctor expressly tabooed all such entertainments—ay, all approach to anything like argument, or even meditation? *My* great occupation, he says, ought to be, to keep this infernal blood of mine from mounting up and boiling in my brain-pan, and to resort to every possible contrivance for coaxing and forcing it down towards my heels—delightful employment! Hurrah, then for the hair gloves and the flesh-brush, after which, a cheerful, graceful turn or two with the dumb-bells.

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Better to day—I find it a relief to record my sensations, and to give my thoughts and whims an occasional airing—yes, I am worth full ten such poor devils as I was yesterday, and almost begin to think I may yet live to be called venerable. How would a course of sparring lessons suit me? Rough sport for an invalid—no, I have hardly physical capital enough for that line of business—and yet there is



something very fascinating about it—so dignified, so heroic, too! I have a sneaking kind of admiration for prize-fighters—I took, I fear, an inexcusable degree of interest in the great Hyer and Sullivan encounter—perhaps we sickly, feeble fellows are too apt to look with a sort of idolatry at these magnificent specimens of muscular development, and are not sufficiently alive to their moral and intellectual short-comings—true, and yet it is a “glorious thing to have a giant’s strength”—ay, a delightful thing to be able to trot along comfortably, with a barrel of flour under each arm; or, in a moment of righteous indignation, rapidly and scientifically, to lay low a score or two of insolent hackmen. This is certainly a great deal more than Dr. Channing could have done, at any period of his career—he was a champion of a different stamp—in the matter of physical force, he was not worth a pinch of snuff—a small boy could have floored him with ease—but oh, what a Titan with his pen—I was just reading a fine passage in his remarks on Fenelon. How many writers are there on the globe at this moment, who can construct so exquisite a sentence as this? “Has the reader never known a season, when, in the fullest flow of thought and feeling, in the universal action of the soul, an inward calm, profound

as midnight silence, yet bright as the still summer noon, full of joy, but unbroken by one throb of tumultuous passion, has been breathed through his spirit, and given him a glimpse and presage of the serenity of a happier world?" How many individuals, too, are there in this quarter of the globe, who could venture to reply in the affirmative to the question therein asked? a very small upper chamber of a very small mansion would probably hold them all. Do we even comprehend the meaning of this spiritual peace, these heaven-anticipating visions? we, who live in this "great center of commercial interests," as we proudly call it, this bustling, crowded, Grand Café of a town—we bury the Doctor's books, to be sure—we give them an honorable place in our libraries. But do we read them with decided relish? Would we, on the whole, consider it a privilege to have an hour's talk, per diem, with the author? Do we sympathize with him in these lofty views of his? Would we care to accompany him in these heavenward flights? I think I hear an overwhelming majority reply, promptly and honestly, no, no, no—we are in no hurry for these celestial entertainments—give us a snug perch, close alongside of dear old mother earth—we would not be super-spiritual yet a while—we are for hugging, and making much of

the good things about us. We decidedly prefer getting together over our pipes and punch-bowls, and discussing crops, trade, and politics—if conscience *will*, now and then, ask impertinent questions, or if fancy *will* paint disagreeable pictures of the life to come, why, then we smoke all the more furiously, and drink the more deeply. Miserable deluded creatures, that say thus, if not always with their lips, at least in their lives—and yet we invalids are quite as bad in our way, quite as great earth-worms—are we not forever chattering about our groans and pains? Do we not gloat over and make as much of our pills and our purges, our tonics and our gruels, as our brethren, the epicures, do of their fricandeaux and their foie-gras, their wines and their salads? But surely there is some shadow of an excuse, in our case. Nature herself seems to have condemned us to be mere animals—ay, wilfully to have closed the gates upon us, were we ever so much disposed to enter any of the broad avenues of business, philanthropy, or study. If I, for instance, were to continue even these idle pen-ramblings for an hour longer, or were to read half a dozen more pages of the Review of Fenelon, what would be my reward? Why, all sorts of uncomfortable feelings. Feet like icebergs, head like a furnace, great diffi-

culty of breathing, yes, all sorts of shakings, shiverings, shudderings, and nasty inexplicable sensations. I should have to resort forthwith to a scalding foot-bath, turn down a gallon or two of hot catnip tea, by way of stomach-soother, and probably have to lie all night, sandwiched in between two huge mustard plasters. Now, *would* it pay? Is knowledge worth having at such a price? as it is, I shall turn in with fear and trembling—fully expecting that broken, troubled, unrefreshing sleep that ever awaits the Invalid.

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A vile, vile day—sick as a dog—cold as a frog—cross as a bear—hoarse as a crow—were my bite within gunshot of my bark, I could soon make my teeth meet in this mahogany table—yes, I could nip off the heads of ten-penny nails, as if they were so many sprigs of celery, or spears of asparagus. But alas, few and inefficient are my grinders—calomel, and such like pleasing preparations, have consigned two thirds of them to an early grave—and as to getting a new porcelain-outfit, would it pay? Is it at all likely, that I should ever get a fair, satisfactory day's work out of them? Could I get a

new stomach with them, it would be an object, perhaps—what a queer world we live in—how many hundreds and thousands are there of my fellow beings, endowed with magnificent sets of masticators, and with stomachs longing for employment, who, nevertheless can only procure a meal of victuals by begging or stealing it; while I, and many unfortunates like me, are surrounded by dainties, yet have no apparatus worthy of the name, either for laying hold of them, dissolving them, or extracting any comfort or benefit from them. Say, why is this? Tell us, ye ready readers of life's riddles, why are the gifts of nature and of fortune distributed in this capricious, this abominable manner? What have I done, that I should be cursed with this miserable constitution? My parents have both been uniformly hale and hearty. I have committed no excesses, either in the way of pleasure or of study, that can account for my sufferings. No, I have been a sorry, rickety concern from the start—as an infant, my kickings were feeble, my squallings tame and short-lived; as a boy, I had no strength for running, or kite-flying, or even marbles. I don't believe, I ever took a meal in all my life, before or since weaning, with real, unaffected relish—I ask again, why is this? Ex-

plain to me, ye, who decipher so promptly the handwriting of the Creator in all the minutiae of life, explain, if you please, the *cui bono* of this particular arrangement. I cannot see it! Ah sir, you have no faith—faith—faith—had you a cheerful and abiding faith, you would put a better face on matters, and would not be whining and grumbling thus—alas, too true, too true, and yet how easy is it for you, in this pert, flippant way to prescribe this sovereign remedy. I should like to see a little more of it in your own conduct and conversation; you are quite too sleek and rosy, most of you, for genuine disciples—let me be patient, however, I shall soon be on the other side of the great gulf—then will this painful problem be solved—ay, and the ten thousand other mysteries of life, that now so tease, and vex, and puzzle the will, “and make sick the souls of us poor fools of nature.”

Confound those kittens—there they are, again, dancing the polka round my cream-jug—pretty little villains—hide your diminished heads, ye Taglionis, and Ceritos, ye Ellslers, and Fitz Jameses—what are all your saltations, and circumgyrations, and attitudinizings, compared with the motions of these youngsters, these miniature, tame tigresses—what treacherous looking eyes, though—yes, they

look as if they had a vivid recollection of the apostasy, and were anxious to commence hostilities forthwith, with the whole family of man. Can it be, that the tradition hath been thus faithfully handed down from one generation of cats to another? You would like, no doubt, you young scamps, to be in the woods at this moment, there combining and confederating with your kinsmen, for the purpose of eating us all up, and having the planet to yourselves—yes, you would like to be sucking my breath, and scratching out my eyes, this blessed minute—off with you, sc—t' sc—t.

This is Election Day, and we are all urged by our brethren of the press, in leaders of unusual fervor, to rush early to the polls, and deposit our votes; it seems that the country is more than ever in danger, this fine frosty morning. I can't help it, for one, I shall not budge an inch. What, wilfully run away from the discharge of this imperative duty? blindly waive the exercise of this sovereign right? throw away this choicest flower of your prerogative? Most assuredly—not, however, for any such pitiful reason, as that I am profoundly ignorant of the characters, even of the names of nearly all the gentlemen on each list of candidates; because, cripple though I be, it was clearly my

duty to get full and clear information on these important points. I shall stay away, simply because I have not strength and nerve sufficient fairly to meet those annoyances which I am sure to encounter, if I go. I have quite too vivid a recollection, I assure you, of the scrape I got into, whilst exercising the elective franchise, last season. What did I gain by that experiment? Was I not detained, hustled, bruised? Were not my corns trod on? Did I not part company for ever with the larboard skirt of my coat? Was not my hat cut off in the flower of its youth? And did I not overhear myself called, several times, a cursed old Federalist? And was not one of these very traducers, a servant whom I had turned off a few days before, for stealing my wine? And did not his vote destroy all the efficacy of mine? And did I not the next morning find, as usual, that I had been voting with a hopeless minority? And do you presume to ask me to make the same fool of myself to-day? I shall do no such thing, I assure you. Ay, but the union of these States—the blessed union itself, my dear sir, is in danger. I am sorry to hear it, gentlemen, but really if it *be* in such a rickety condition, that its salvation depends upon the votes of a few invalids, why, the sooner it goes by the board, the better.



But I don't believe a word of it. I have no more doubt that, whichever of the two sets of candidates be chosen this day, the great, permanent, substantial interests of the union will be duly watched and protected, than I have that the boats will go up the river to-morrow, or the cars leave for Boston. At the same time, I am equally convinced that, in the present excited state of the public mind, there will be, in all human probability, as there was last year, a most disgusting scuffle at the Polls, which, as a sick man, I would fain dodge—so leave me, if you please, to the peaceful enjoyment of my morning gown and slippers.

Disunion, forsooth! pray, where *are* these mighty men, these political Samsons, who threaten to bring down this glorious fabric about our ears? who would fain demolish this, the most solid, magnificent structure that legislators ever erected for the admiration and imitation of mankind? Well, gentlemen, how are you going to work? Where do you propose to begin? What vulnerable point have you selected for this impious assault? What spell have you found potent enough to dissolve these myriad relations which bind us together, with all their dependent duties, interests, memories, affections? relations which are multiplying every

moment, by inter-marriage, by emigration, by all sorts of enterprises, public and private, religious and secular? Are we not literally tied together by ten thousand bands of iron? And who are you, that would thus madly pull us apart, in spite of Nature and Art themselves? in spite of Steam and Lightning, who are even now, in fulfilment of their great mission, drawing us closer and closer continually, as brethen and as sisters, and are converting this huge and ever growing republic into one great and loving family? Are we not at this moment, through their influences, far more compact and solid as a nation, far nearer together for all purposes of pleasures, or of business, for all interchange of visits or of ideas, than we were when the old thirteen first joined their hands, and pledged their faith around the blessed tree of liberty? And now that the thirteen are on the eve of becoming three times thirteen, do you propose to break up this beautiful association, to destroy this harmonious movement, and to throw us all back into confusion and chaos? Thank heaven, the idea is as monstrous and absurd, as it is unfilial and villanous. Dissolve this union, truly! as well might a six-months-old babe undertake, with his tender little fingers, to pull a huge cotton mill to pieces—as well

might a parcel of truant boys, in a crazy sail-boat, undertake to run down an ocean steamer, as this miserable gang of malcontents to wreck our glorious ship of state.

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OH DEAR, what a strange, absurd, ungovernable humor I am in this morning. I seem to have no control over myself whatever I can hardly keep from making all sorts of animal noises, from cutting all sorts of silly capers—I feel like breaking all the panes of glass in the country—like smashing all the crockery and furniture of the land to atoms—yes, I would like to begin, this minute, throwing double sommersets, and keep at it, heels over head, head over heels, even till the crack of doom. What crazy whims *will* continually enter this poor brain of mine, in spite of myself. I was, even now, in imagination, going down in a diving bell, down, down, down to the bottom of the sea, and for no other purpose than to pop a counterfeit hundred pound note into the hands of an astonished sea-nymph; and presently, I was going up in a great balloon, in company with chattering apes and grinning wild-cats—yes, up, up, up to the blessed

moon itself, and with no other or more laudable object in view, than to take the venerable man thereof by the nose. Pray, is it not enough that my broken slumbers should be invaded by such abominable fancies, but they must beard me thus in broad daylight? Am I not a poor, unlucky dog? At this rate, reason will soon leave me in disgust, and forever—ay, and conscience will not much longer condescend to hold her court in such a miserable concern as I am. What sort of a life is this I lead? What dignity, or value, or moral meaning hath it? A moment ago, I was for indulging in all kinds of antics—making a perfect ninny and harlequin of myself; directly, I shall be as dull, and dumb, and helpless as a mummy; or at best, fidgetting over the fire, or growling over my gruel—yes, I begin to feel the reaction already—oh, how grim I look,—had I been chewing ashes for the last six months, and washing them down with ink, I could not have a more lugubrious visage. What a time for some fool of a friend to secure my portrait—what an inspiring subject, too, for the artist. Unless he flattered me most villainously, his work would be a perfect emetic to the beholder. Oh, why am I thus afflicted? thus incapacitated for all that is useful, respectable,

heroic in life? Why was I not endowed with faculties of mind and body, that would have enabled me to command an army, or compile a code, or "the applause of listening senates to command," or to plead the cause of the oppressed, or to preach God's word to my brethren? Why, in place of all this, am I condemned to wretchedness and uselessness? a mere cumberer of the ground? tied down and enslaved to this wretched, dilapidated frame. What sort of a partnership is this, where the poor soul is quite defrauded of all share in the management of the concern? I am for dissolving it forthwith. I long to say farewell to this rebellious stomach, these crazy lungs, these inefficient legs, these dull eyes, this unserviceable brain—let me go then, and have a new outfit in the way of faculties—some new machinery, here or elsewhere, whereby I may become useful to others, and a comfort to myself—yes, I am willing to be the humblest angel that ever flew upon a heavenly errand, or helped swell the celestial choir—anything, anything that may please heaven, so I be speedily emancipated from this vile vassalage.

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WHAT a dose I have been taking! not of the usual kind, however. ——— has been in to see me, and has almost talked me to death—for two long mortal hours has he been rattling away, with his usual ardor and fluency, about what? Why, no less a theme than the uses and capabilities of India rubber. You would have really supposed, from his tone and manner, that there was nothing left under the canopy of heaven, but this great gum—that all the trees and shrubs of earth had given place to the syringe tree, and that the whole human race were, or ought to be, hard at work, securing the precious sap. As to inserting a word edgewise, either in the way of approbation or of remonstrance, it was quite out of the question. Now, is it not too bad? What right has a man to monopolize the conversation thus? What right has he thus to unburthen himself of his thoughts, however weighty they may be, without the slightest reference to the taste, or habits, or character, of the person whom he is addressing? Why, what in the name of old Nicholas and all his imps, do *I* care about India rubber? What's caoutchouc to me, or I to caoutchouc, that he should bore me thus? To make the matter worse, I was feeling tolerably comfortable this morning, and had absolutely forgotten my poor, sorry self, in the divine

pages of Milton—and to be disturbed in this unreasonable, unseasonable manner, to be literally hauled down from the seventh heaven of invention, to the low and grovelling things of earth. I am out of all patience. I quarrel not with the gum, it is a good thing in its way—by no means the least of the gifts of the great Giver—let us use it, then, gratefully and intelligently, let us make the most of it in the way of coats, covers, bags, bottles, and knapsacks. If, possibly, there be some latent nutritive principle residing in it, let us have it out—if, under Providence, India rubber be destined to supplant buckwheat, in the shape of cakes for breakfast, why all the better—but do not, in the name of all that is reasonable, do not postpone to it, or to any thing that was merely given for food, or raiment, or shelter, matters of infinitely more dignity and importance. It is really sad to see a man of talent, and energy, and integrity, so far astray—to see him thus absorbed, heart and soul, in things perishing, and willfully turning his back upon things essential. If we *must* be enthusiasts, do let it be in some great cause—so noble a passion ought to be reserved for grand occasions—be enthusiastic, if you will, about your faith, or about great general truths and principles in science, art, government, but do not throw away all

your zeal on such comparative trifles as the maximum speed of a steamer, or the maximum product of an acre. In this short, frail life of ours, can we be too particular as to the choice of our pursuits, the character of our ends and our means? can we be too careful as to what pleasures we seek, what books we read, what company we keep? But an enthusiast is quite too apt to seek the society of those who reflect his own opinions; of those who, in their folly, or in their cunning, are the mere echoes of all his sentiments. Thus petted, and flattered, and beguiled, will he not necessarily become conceited, opinionative, full of himself and his schemes, jealous of all opposition, if not positively overbearing and tyrannical? If his cause were the loftiest on earth, surely these are not the qualities to add to its lustre, or to ensure its success, on the contrary, are not such men invariably, in the end, betrayed to their ruin, either by their own blind passions, or by the arts of crafty men, whose tools they have become? Still, they *may* have the consolation of perishing in a noble cause, but when a man's enthusiasm is forever expended upon trifles, and he is, moreover, perpetually shifting the objects of that enthusiasm, then there is neither dignity nor comfort to sustain him in the hour of trouble. If his schemes succeed,



there is no true glory in them—if they fail, as they are almost sure to fail, in his inconstant, impatient hands, they leave him without any claim on the admiration or sympathy of others. As to the kind offices of friends, what right has he to expect them? has he not ever preferred, to true friends, the company of flatterers and underlings? Nay, fortunate will he be, if he escape the sneers and taunts of the very scoundrels who have used him for their own selfish ends. Is it not then, I ask again, a sorry sight, to behold a man of ability, and of good intentions, thus wandering from the right path; thus mistaking the true objects of life; thus wasting his energies upon a series of visionary projects; letting go this wild, mad-cap scheme, only to take hold of the next that comes along; dismounting from one hobby, only to jump up on another, and so to keep it up, to the end of the chapter, dashing and hurrying along, with all the speed and fury of a Gilpin, but, alas, without the good luck of a Gilpin at the close—yes, to see him, at last, thrown ingloriously to the ground, and, if escaping without broken neck or limbs, at best sadly bruised and wounded, in body and spirit, harassed, mortified, soured, ending his days, it may be, in gloom and bitterness of soul? But are we, who behold and comment upon this sad

spectacle, a whit better ourselves? Are we not all a poor miserable set of bunglers and blunderers? Pray, how many of us are there who *are* on the right track? How many are there on this round earth, this very moment, who can lay claim to any respectable amount of wisdom or of goodness? Are we not all blindly mistaking, or wilfully forsaking the true road to happiness; if we know the right, do we not still the wrong pursue? Do we not meanly surrender to every little paltry temptation that springs up in our path? Who so amiable and exemplary, that he is not at times disgusted with himself? For my own poor part, when I think of what I ought to be, and of what I am, I am tempted to curse the very hour of my birth. In what corner of the universe dare I hold up my head? Had I not better have been a bird or bee, or the humblest flower that blows, or the meanest pebble on the seashore, than the miserable, guilty creature that I am? But enough of this—let me once more run away from my worthless self, if I can, and take refuge in the thoughts of this divine master of his art, this reverend prince of poets.

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BETTER, better, better, to-day—I hardly know myself—head cool, brain clear, stomach in the line of its duty—why, I positively feel like dancing, leaping, whistling—I could give nine hearty cheers—I absolutely read a passage just now in Kent's Commentaries with ease, with relish; I think I might venture on Fearne himself; will it last, though? is it not a mere temporary and treacherous relief? Blue pill, the cause? let me give it due credit therefor—but then the infernal debit side of the account remains to be seen—I shall pay for it, no doubt, with most usurious interest—meanwhile, let me enjoy my freedom—let me taste this blessed, balmy air.

I have had the happiness of seeing again, to-day, that noble work of art, the Course of Empire. Oh, is it not a magnificent performance? what grandeur of design—what beautiful and elaborate execution—what affluence of ideas—and those ideas illustrated in so faithful and masterly a manner—no running away from the grand theme—no, it is fairly grappled with, and with a giant's strength—into what a world of details has the artist gone, and in what a thorough, exhausting way has he handled them—the whole forms, indeed, a glorious epic on canvass. In such hands, the pencil seems

more impressive and eloquent in its teachings even than the pen. Could Wordsworth himself have taught us this great lesson with equal power and beauty? There is, indeed, great similarity of genius in the two artists—the same loftiness and purity of thought—the same finished and elaborate splendor of style—the same intense love of, and diligent following after, Nature. How different again, were they in their destinies—the poet was permitted to wander and meditate in his loved woods, even to a good old patriarchal age—the painter was suddenly summoned from his labors in the very bloom and vigor of his powers; when his brain was more than ever fertile in images of beauty, and his hand more than ever prompt to give them life and lustre. Oh, can it be, that these rare faculties of his are forever hushed in death? No, no—our hearts protest, most fervently protest, against the horrid thought. Surely they exist, *even now*, and are actively employed in some higher sphere—exerted under more genial influences; emancipated from the paltry cares that so distract the artist's career on earth; united to some far more exquisite organization; surrounded by far higher standards of grandeur, and beauty, and goodness; expatiating in scenery far more magnificent; yes, drinking in

with an hundred-fold more joy, reproducing with an hundred-fold more power, lights and shades, and forms and hues, which it entereth not into the hearts of us poor residents of earth to conceive. Is it not better to believe this, than to believe that such precious gifts are rusting in the earth, unused? Is then the great soul of Shakspeare still a prisoner beneath that solemn chancel? condemned, for how long we know not, to the silence, and darkness, and nothingness of that dreary vault? or is it at large, playing some lofty part, doing some glorious duty, in some nobler region of the universe? The idea of annihilation cannot be tolerated—but this indefinite suspension of our faculties, this waiting in our graves, thousands of years, perhaps, for some vaguely defined and ever-receding day of judgment—is it a pleasant, an inspiring thought? And those of us who were without graves, who were burned to ashes, or ground to powder, or devoured by beasts, or swallowed up in ocean, where are they slumbering? What has become of these millions on millions of souls that were made since the world began? Are they all in a state of unconsciousness? And are they to be joined by millions on millions more of sleepers, century after century, even to the dawning of this great day of reckoning? Why

this indefinite postponement of the rewards of the virtuous, and of the punishments of the wicked? Why this monstrous waste of faculties, that might have been put to noble uses elsewhere? But if this be the Scripture doctrine, how worse than idle are all these inquiries. Submit then in silence; ask no more vain questions, that cannot be answered on this side the grave—Revelation hath not condescended to answer them; Reason is overwhelmed in the attempt to solve them—these are themes to be approached but seldom, even by the mightiest minds—and then with honest purpose and reverent demeanor. What right then have such fellows as I, whose wits, such as they are, are all enfeebled and entangled by disease, to meddle with these matters, and to puzzle ourselves with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? Let me then run away in time, else death or lunacy will surely overtake me—far better for me to be chopping wood this minute, or drawing water, or even crying clams along the highway, than to be indulging in these vain speculations. Am I not already paying for this abuse of my freedom? My head swims, my blood is stagnant—let me rush out into the street, and walk as if eighteen hundred bailiffs were after me—yes, doctor, I will—you're right—the animal nature *must*

be developed—the legs must do double duty, and the brain must retire on half-pay. Boating, riding, billiards, shuffleboard, quoits, tenpins, be these the great, the predominant employments of my days—chequers, cribbage, backgammon, be these the solace of my nights—chess is quite too intellectual. As for mathematics or metaphysics, farewell, forever, to *them*—a long farewell to Locke, and Bacon, and Shakspeare, and Milton, and Coleridge. I may occasionally dip into Pendennis or Pickwick, with safety; but, as a permanency, had better confine myself to almanacs and advertisements—a pretty line of life truly—a pretty descent from the scholar's ideal. It is as if a man were wilfully to abandon his Fifth Avenue palace, and go down and take lodgings at the Five Points. Yes, my dear doctor, you merely ask me to throw the ear of corn away, and hug the husk to my bosom—to let the kernels go, and fasten my teeth in the shells. Be it so—be it so—if the ass enjoyed his thistles, why may I not make a comfortable meal of chesnut-burs? Curse—but no, no—let me be resigned, not rebellious—let me still cherish the hope of brighter days to come.

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WHAT a lovely morning—"so cool, so calm, so bright, the bridal of the earth and sky"—yet I confess I am looking at it through yellow spectacles—as *I* feel, there is "no glory in the grass, no splendor in the flower." How can it be otherwise? Is not my stomach again in a state of rebellion? Do not my legs refuse to honor my drafts? I might as well carry a pumpkin about upon these shoulders, as this poor, miserable, unserviceable noddle—oh, how the thatch is tumbling from this thin roof of mine—my hairs are leaving me, faster than ever rats abandoned sinking ship. If paying away dollars to quacks could have effected it, I ought now to be putting Absalom to the blush, with my thick, golden clusters; but no, gentlemen, in spite of your long classic names, your flaming manifestoes, and your gayly-colored and nose-inviting preparations, the tonsure is hourly increasing in circumference—not all the oil in all the bears of either pole can mend the matter—my pate will very soon become as smooth and shining as yon ostrich egg—it is so written in the book of fate: I am strongly inclined, moreover, to the opinion, that a furiously small proportion of the heads that fall in your way, reap any benefit from your costly mixtures—between ourselves, is not the whole thing a gigantic



humbug? And yet, your patients seem to be increasing continually—your deluded victims are scattered all over the union, even to the remotest bounds of Oregon. You grow rich, you build splendid houses, you drive showy equipages, you lead the fashion, you lay down the law, not only in your own department, but in all the walks of life. You would, no doubt, feel indignant, to be compared, either as men of intellect, or as benefactors of your race, to Hale, or Holt, or Mansfield, or Marshall, or Kent, or Story. Well, let us not begrudge you this prosperity of yours; it is of our own making—we love to be humbugged. Who is there, that doth not bow the knee to some quackery, or other? One man has a mania for pill-taking, he could no more go to sleep without his pills, than he could without his night-cap, or without saying his prayers; another is crazy about some confounded mineral spring or other; he is for ever preaching about it, and deluging his inner man with it, to the constant amazement and final overthrow of his stomach. Who does not like to dwell upon his ailments and discomforts? And let a man propose to remove the one, or add to the number of the other, be he impudent charlatan, or bona fide professor, is he not ever sure of a prompt hear-

ing? Ears, hearts, purses, are they not all forthwith opened unto him? Doth he offer to replenish and rejuvenate your locks, mend your complexion, give your teeth a new lease of life, extirpate your corns? Ah, welcome, brother; sit down, sit down, let us talk the matter over—another enters, and with all the calm wisdom of a Fenelon, ventures to commend to your attention the Colonization Cause, or broaches the delicate subject of Home or of Foreign Missions. How restless, how fidgety—how precious your time has suddenly become—you either wilfully feign a pre-engagement, or bluntly refuse to give a solitary penny to any such visionary enterprises. You are willing to give ten dollars for a single concert ticket, but refuse half the amount to the aged indigent females, or colored half orphans of the county—you propose to give a thousand dollar ball in the course of the season, but have not the remotest idea of adding five to the salary of that hard-working clergyman, who is compelled to sustain himself, wife, and baker's dozen of children upon paltry two hundred. Oh, what a precious set most of us are—so spiritually minded, too—why, the slightest suspicion of a sprinkling will frighten us away from the sanctuary, and yet we will face a tempest that the most

profane smuggler would hardly venture abroad in, to hear the warblings of a Sontag, or see the twirlings of an Ellsler. Is this mere talk, or the naked truth? So intellectual, too—will any man deny, that, even in this glorious nineteenth century, there are far more hundreds and thousands who relish cock-fights and prize-fights, than there are units and tens who enjoy the sermons of a Chalmers, or the opinions of a Marshall? I speak not as a censor—alas, I am not a whit better than my neighbors; disabled, shut out as I am from their ordinary amusements and dissipations, am I not, in my small way, quite as selfish and sensual? Am I not querulous, peevish, egotistical? For ever dwelling on my troubles, scolding about my medicines, boring my friends to death with the whole history of my feelings? Pah—what a paltry life is this—morally and intellectually considered, it is not worth the quarter part of a pinch of the meanest snuff. As a rational being, I am losing ground daily—my standard of excellence is becoming lower and lower—ambition all oozing away—all high aspirations going, if not gone for ever; I caught myself, even now, vindicating the course of Faustus, and wishing I had the same bargain offered me—I was making the most disgraceful compromises with conscience—was

selling out my entire spiritual birthright for a few short years of indulgence, even of health ; for shame, man, for shame—struggle with these vile thoughts, these beastly suggestions of the tempter. Oh, for a hearty, generous, substantial, downright fit of sickness—a fair fight with the enemy—an aut Cæsar aut nihil business of it, so might I get handsomely out of the woods, and be a man again, or else receive my mittimus forthwith. Out upon these villanous, treacherous, nervous disorders—these unmanly combatants that will not show themselves—these bush-fighters—these reptiles, that steal upon you with all the malignity of a copperhead, and, ere you are aware of it, infuse their vile venom into both soul and body—of what use, pray, are doctors and their doses against such rascally antagonists as these? No, no, the only possible relief from these infernal sensations is in exercise, constant and violent motion—nothing else ; so let me up and away—walk, run, hop, leap, skip, jump, dance, wrestle, scuffle, tumble around like mad—never mind the immortal part, let it repose, for the present, in swinish slumber ; send the muscles to school, and give the brain holiday—oh, let me solemnly resolve to dedicate the next six months to climbing ropes, and pulling weights, and cutting

pigeon-wings, and to a thorough course of ground and lofty tumbling; had I not better turn clown in the ring, and spend half my time walking about on my hands? Yes, even that were better than to sit here, moping, and groaning, and nursing these horrible feelings, these cruel enemies of my peace.

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I OUGHT to be grateful for a rare privilege that I have enjoyed this morning—that of seeing two exquisite pictures—Cole's *Dream of Arcadia*, and Durand's *Thanatopsis*. The first is a composition full of beautiful details—replete with all that is sweet, and touching, and soothing in rural life—here are noble spreading trees, and far reaching vistas—in the distance, gray hills and towers with time-stained walls—nearer, on the right, a gushing, sparkling waterfall—in front, the same stream, placidly winding through the valley—mothers with their children are wandering along its banks—boys are gathering lilies on its margin—a little farther on, it is spanned by a graceful bridge, over which a maiden and her lover are galloping—under the trees are scattered groups of old men and women, young men and maidens—some are spinning, some dancing and making music, some

returning from the chase—others are chatting, or quietly basking in the sweet sunshine—on the brow of a neighboring hill stands a classic temple, its image partially reflected in the stream that skirts its base—before it, priests are offering sacrifices, the smoke from which is gently curling up into the calm, bright sky—oh, what a charming scene, so happily composed, and clad in such robes of splendor—what a cordial to the nerves is it, to behold a picture like this. Blessed he, who can dream such dreams, and can thus portray them for the delight and edification of his brethren! How different the Thanatopsis—less brilliant, less crowded with imagery, but equally fine in its way—a calm, solemn, comprehensive picture—far more subdued in its style than the other, but far grander in its subject, and appealing far more powerfully to our hearts. How admirably does it illustrate and enforce the thoughts of the poem which suggested it—“Earth, and her waters, and the depths of air,” are here *indeed* teaching the great lesson which the poet assigns them, in his matchless verse—here are the same hills

Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun—the vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness between—  
The venerable woods—rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green.

Here too are the familiar images of Death—the church, and churchyard, the narrow house, the funeral rites, all announce his presence, while his past triumphs are disclosed by broken statues, and prostrate columns, half buried in earth—over the scene the setting sun is shedding a gentle, mellow light, diffused through the “soft vapory air”—the effect of the whole is most tranquillizing and delightful. I say again, happy they who can see such things, and can describe them thus, with pen and pencil, for the gratification and instruction of their fellow-men:—“Blessings be on them, and eternal praise”—their laurels well become their brows—true benefactors are they; far more deserving of the name than the man who merely multiplies the blades of grass upon earth’s surface—what doth he, but humbly minister to our bodily wants, while they sustain, and comfort, and elevate our hearts.

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ANOTHER bright morning—would that *I* were bright; but no, I’m as dull as a penny that has been in circulation half a century—I am disgusted with myself and life, and all that belongs to it—I am tired to death of this eternal round of little paltry nothings

that go to make up my existence—tired of paying tribute to this vile body—it is a sufficiently humiliating service that we have to render, even in good health. What with the calls of nature and the requirements of decency, we have an abundantly busy time of it—what a frightfully large portion of our lives is necessarily consumed in eating, drinking, sleeping—in washing, dressing, shaving—tying and untying—buttoning and unbuttoning!—what an infernal amount of brushing, rubbing, scouring, combing, paring, trimming, *must* be performed by every mother's son of us, be he wise or foolish, hearty or sickly—why, at least half the gift of life is swallowed up in these miserable minutiae. But to have to lavish these, and ten thousand other little delicate attentions, on such a contemptible, ungrateful carcass as *I* am tied to—is it not too bad? Yes, I am sick unto death of standing under shower-baths; of irritating this old hide with plasters and hair-gloves; of dancing attendance on cathartics; of gagging over bowls, while waiting the good pleasure of emetics—out upon it—what vile, intolerable slavery it is—oh dear, this is the thousandth time to-day, I believe, that I have blown this rascally old nose of mine—ought I be to *very* grateful for such a small-beer, small-potato existence as this?



How much more of it, pray, is there in reserve? How many more dreary days and dismal nights, before I get my discharge? I can hardly keep, at times, from cursing myself and all creation: when I think how abominably I have been defrauded of everything worth having in life, I could almost shake my rebel fist at the great Throne of Grace itself. Fie, fie, fie! shame on you, man. Is this the language or the conduct of a Christian, or of a respectable heathen? Would Socrates have talked or acted in this disgraceful manner? not he; nor Aristides, nor Phocion, nor Philopœmen—true, true, true! I am wrong, all wrong—let me then, be patient and submissive—let me take the portion assigned me, without grumbling, without wry faces—let me try to recognize the hand of a Father in all these dispensations. And now, to bed, to bed; and oh, let me hope and pray, that to morrow's sun will find me, if not a healthier, at least a wiser and a better man!

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A CALL from ——— to day—by no means a pleasant one—confound the fellow, he looked more shabbily and smelt more villanously than ever—'twas

enough to knock down ten regiments of Life Guards—what a rascally way of committing an assault and battery; the law ought to protect us from such scamps. Have I an appetite so often, too, that I can afford to have it taken away in this infamous style? pah! never, never shall the filthy wretch darken my doors again. But am I not too hard upon him? Is he not, with all his nastiness, one of the most talented, amiable, exemplary of men? Indeed, he is. I ask his pardon—nay, I confess, that though I was forced to hold my nose during the whole visit, I was right glad to keep my ears wide open, for he talked both wittily and wisely. The more the pity, that he should be cursed with such an infirmity. There seems to be no help for it—all the remonstrances of his friends, all the mortifications that he is constantly subjected to, make no impression upon him—he is determined literally to fulfill the injunction of Scripture, “he which is filthy let him be filthy still”—*he* will be, most unquestionably, so long as that vile breath remains in that unwashed body of his—the only bath *he* will ever take, will be owing to a tumble into some dock, or the capsizing of a boat, or, possibly, the misdirected efforts of some hose company. His wardrobe, too, will, no doubt, retain the same spotted aspect, the

same dilapidated condition, even to the closing scene. What sort of lodging must the man live in—few piggeries, in the union, probably, as unsavory. Can he wonder that people dodge him, cut him, slam their doors in his face? Is it at all strange, that boys stop their sports to point at him? that babies squall, and horses take fright, when he heaves in sight? that dogs bark at him? that temperance tracts are slipped into his hand? that omnibus-drivers hesitate about receiving him? that barbers are in no hurry to shave him? that discreet sextons will not show him to a pew? that landlords say, “we are full,” when he presents himself at the counter? a pretty fellow, he, for a pall-bearer, or groomsmen, or manager at a ball, or aid to a Grand Marshal. Ought he to expect any reasonable woman to accept his addresses? to acknowledge *him* as a lover, compared with whom, the farthest-gone cheese is as fragrant as the rose of Sharon? No, no! Love is blind, but then the nose has its claims, and cannot put up with such a standing insult as this—and if he *were* married, I doubt whether it would alter him in this particular—the habit is quite too confirmed—if he did not positively disgrace himself upon his wedding day, still, long, long before the

waning of the honey moon, he would relapse into the same unshaven, unshorn, unsavory condition as ever. Poor man: it seems hard, perhaps, that because of a mere physical infirmity, he should be so shabbily treated by a community, which is quite too apt to greet with open arms every well-dressed scoundrel that comes along—yet, is it so unjust? Ought there to be any compromise with nastiness? Filth—the enemy, not only of comfort and comeliness, but of good order and sound morals—what can we expect from a community that will not keep their streets clean? what, but eternal tumults and breaches of the peace? Would you look for sound constitutional law from a dirty Senate? or sound law of any kind from a bench of ragged judges, or sound theology from a convocation of unshaven divines? Nay, who would *take* the wisdom of Diogenes, if compelled to take his dirt along with it? who would listen to the divine Plato himself, if forced to hold a bottle of salts to his nose, or to burn pastiles all the time he was talking? no—Beauty, Dignity, Morality, Piety, all alike protest against such intolerable beastliness. What can ——— expect, then, but wide berths, cold shoulders, angry looks, from his poor brethren in the flesh? So long as that worthy soul of his keeps

possession of her present musty, rascally habitation, she need not look forward to any recognition of her claims upon our admiration or regard.

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OH Lord—I begin the day, as usual, with a grunt—not the comfortable grunt, alas, which the hog gives, while discussing his plenteous meal of swill—oh, no, no—far different are *my* demonstrations—no such good luck as that for *me*. Ought I to blush when I say that I often envy my four-footed brother his many privileges? his sound sleep, for instance—his unfailing appetite, his princely digestion, his freedom from care, his exemption from all the servile labors of the toilet—no boots pinch *his* toes—no hat chafes *his* brow—no coat cuts *him* to the quick—his life is short, to be sure—his death violent; his exit is a noisy and undignified one, I admit—but then it is soon over—and after death, there is the consoling thought that he confers pleasure on the man that eats him—while *I* enjoy nothing here, nor shall be enjoyed after I am gone. Oh dear—pretty language this, is it not, for a rational and accountable being—a pretty proposition truly—to exchange radiant, all-glorious man-

hood, for vile, abominable pigness! And yet, is there not, after all, full as much of the porcine as of the seraphic about poor human nature? Are not even the best of us quite willing to defer the pure joys of heaven to the latest possible moment? Do we not all hang on, with frightful tenacity of grip, to the pleasures of flesh and sense? Yes, the great English moralist himself was but too happy to descend from his sublime moral stilts, to drop down from his lofty rhetorical flights, and literally transform himself into a swine, not only in the quantity that he ate, and the voracity with which he pounced upon the viands, but in the actual vocal accompaniments of his over-relished meals. What right, then, have we ordinary mortals to take airs upon ourselves, and to disclaim all relationship with our poor four-legged neighbors, and co-tenants of earth? Are not they, as well as we, a part of the blessed work of creation, and were they not pronounced good? And are we so very much better? No, I say again, that for one, I am more disposed to envy than to crow over these brethren of the land, and sea, and sky. So far from insulting them, I am for cultivating amicable relations with the whole concern, even with mosquitoes—even they must have some latent good qualities, or they

would not have entered into the creation-plan. Besides, how comparatively dull and empty would the world have been without these fellow-occupants. Who has not seen horses that he could almost hug, and dogs that he could almost die for, such noble traits have they revealed—nor let the pig go unhonored—he too, has done wonders in his day. Who does not remember with pleasure the exploits of the famous learned swine, who a few years since made the tour of our beloved Union? what a famous crop of laurels he gathered for himself, and of dollars for his owner—it was delightful to see him, sitting cozily on his haunches, and taking a social game of whist—often securing the odd trick, too, by a happy display of memory and judgment. I wonder what ever became of that interesting porker—was there not a dark rumor that he fell, in the dead of night, before the treacherous blade of a Cincinnati butcher? and yet I can hardly believe that such a wretch as he *must* have been, ever trod the soil of Ohio—yes, it was even so—and at the very time when the dear quadruped was about to commence a course of German literature—out upon this vile, money-loving age and land. Had this precious pig been a native of Italy, how different had been his career—he would have gone down to his

grave full of years and honors—his pen would have been lined with mother-of-pearl, and hung round with masterpieces—poets would have sung his praises—statues of bronze and marble would have been raised in his honor, in every piazza of every city through the land. Nay, might not St. Anthony himself, bless his dear old soul, have descended in propria persona, and have carried off bodily to heaven this miracle of swinehood, this admirable Crichton of his race?

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ANOTHER good-for-nothing day—but I will not grumble—besides, if I *had* good health, most likely I should abuse the privilege. Had my constitution been other than it is, might I not at this very moment have been a gambler, drunkard, rake, or an impudent quack, or vile pettifogger, or pot-house politician, or some other such nuisance to society? or, if innocent, still a poor drudge, and hack, a slave to care, immersed in unprofitable pursuits, absorbed in vain speculations? I am far better off, perhaps, as I am—if disqualified for much that is useful and honorable, if deprived of knowledge, power, fame, still, spared a world of toils, out of the reach of a



host of temptations. My prospects in the world to come, too, are *they* not all the brighter, perhaps, for this arrangement? It may be so. And yet, who would wish to sneak into heaven in this pitiful kind of way? What sort of goodness is that which never tastes the air—which sees no service—which never, perhaps, has had a solitary fair up-and-down fight with the adversary? pretty poor, flimsy stuff, I should say—and small and cheap ought to be its rewards—no burden in the cross, no lustre in the crown—who wants such paltry laurels? No, give me a prize worth fighting for—give me health, strength, vigor of mind, ay, all the endowments of a man, with all his perils and responsibilities. Thus armed, let me go forth and struggle with Beelzebub, as best I may—if I conquer, then bind my brows with victorious wreaths. If I fall, I fall through my own folly and wickedness, and let me pay the bitter penalty—let me suffer, in shame and silence, the punishment that I have fairly earned. But am I not deceiving myself? Even as it is, am I so *very* sure of heaven—are my prospects in the next world so very cheering? *Have* I even that negative goodness of which I speak? Can I lay claim even to that poor pennyworth of laurels which is in store for it? Nay, am I not as vile a sinner in *my* way,

as the halest and heartiest villain on earth is in *his*? Yes—yes—Death is not more busy with his darts, than Satan with his temptations. Who can escape them—be he sick or well, rich or poor, feeble-witted or giant in mind? And have I not basely yielded to mine? Am I not a poor, miserable culprit, full of rebellious, envious, blasphemous thoughts? Why, did I not, but even now, in the bitterness of my heart, curse an inoffensive brother that passed by my window, and for no better reason than because he looked plump, and rosy, and vigorous, and swung his arms about with a happy, self-satisfied air? Am I not, too, continually envying the rich man his riches, the scholar his acquirements, the married man his family? Am I not at this very moment, murmuring at my lot, compelled as I am by sickness to this vile, dreary bachelor existence. Why may I not discharge the great primal duty of man, that of begetting offspring? Is it not all that the Scriptures condescend to tell us about men, for the first twenty centuries of their existence, that they begat sons and daughters? And why am I deprived of the duties and pleasures of marriage, why thus shut out from my proper place in society? And so I fret, and grumble, and curse my hard fate, and question the ways of Providence.

And is such a fellow fit for heaven? A pretty figure, truly, should *I* cut amongst the cherubim and seraphim—great pleasure should *I* take, indeed, in their sweet hymns and fervent hallelujahs! *My* feelings are far more like those of wicked Macbeth,

“I ’gin to be aweary of the sun,  
And wish the estate of the world were all undone.”

Fie, for shame, where is my faith—faith, the only comfort for poor, erring mortals, the only stay for falling sinners—faith in the paternal government of God. But, oh! how hard it is to get such faith. The idea seems almost monstrous, that I, a feeble, imbecile nobody, occupying a mere pin-point, as it were, of space, living but a poor hour or two of time, should claim such near and dear relationship with Him who is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Alas, these very attributes that we so flippantly ascribe to the Creator, so far from ministering to our comfort, only crush and overwhelm our minds. The idea, again, that by means of some vile sickness, or paltry casualty, we are summoned forthwith into the presence of such a Being as this, is it reasonable? On the contrary, must not millions and millions of years elapse, with their corresponding development of my moral and

intellectual nature, before a creature, such as I, could endure for a moment to be confronted with the ineffable glory of the Infinite God? Do not all the laws of Order, and of Progress, and of Harmony, forbid a notion so monstrous? Still leave me not desolate, let me have *some* Father in heaven, though he be not the very God of the universe—let me have *some* Throne of Grace, at whose feet to lay my petitions—*some* dread tribunal, to which to render my account—my poor soul must repose somewhere. I would not be an outcast from heaven—I seek not to be absolved from my allegiance—sinner that I am, I would not escape my just punishment. Such a poor, helpless wretch as I am, must lean upon *some* higher power, even were it the most cruel of tyrannies—*some* future state or other I ask for, even were it *one of torment*, anything, anything but annihilation. The thought that I am the mere child of chance, and as such, entitled to a dreary independence, ending in oblivion, is too horrible to be borne; heart and soul rebel against it; all the phenomena of life give it the lie. Men sometimes affect to believe it, but no, they do not. Were it the real creed of the world, it would become one huge den of drunkards, thieves, and murderers, ere this new moon were old. No, no, no, idolaters we *may* be, and

have been from the beginning, but not atheists, not materialists. We have done all manner of silly, wicked, and abominable things in our worship, we admit; we have bowed down before dogs, and cats, and crocodiles; we have bent the knee to all manner of vile graven images; we have kissed the feet of wicked popes; we have poisoned our creeds with all manner of false doctrines and metaphysical subtleties, and have shed the blood of those who would not subscribe to them; we have had recourse to confiscations, slaughters, burnings; we *have* done all sorts of horrible, horrible things, in the name of religion, but would it not have been a thousand-fold more horrible, had there been no religion at all in the world, had men never longed after or even thought of a life beyond the grave? Could there ever have been any education, or laws, or manners, or any society whatever, without the religious principle? No, we should not have even risen to the dignity of savages, but would have been positive beasts. The earth might still, perhaps, have performed her circuit in the heavens—might still have been visited by the fair light of day—but what a rugged, howling wilderness she would have been, instead of the dear, glorious, venerable planet that she is. And is it not frightful to think of a great

orb, rolling through space, full of life and verdure, and yet without a single intelligent, responsible being upon its surface? To suppose such a thing, is to reflect upon the wisdom of the Great Designer. What a brilliant theatre, without actors or audience; a school, without teacher or scholars; a vast cathedral where no service is ever performed, no voice of prayer, no song of praise ever heard; even such a worthless, meaningless thing would this green earth of ours have been without faith.

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OH, what a rascally, abominable frame of mind I seem to be in this morning. Why, why is it? everything about me is bright and cheerful; the sun is out in all his glory; the birds are singing, bees humming, brooks chattering; the butterflies are all on the wing, the wind is playing with the leaves, and the flowers are nodding their pretty heads to each other in friendly recognition; the children are frolicking with the dogs; the kittens are cutting up their capers; the old nags are kicking up their interesting heels in the meadow; yes, everything around seems cozy and pleasant, and altogether delightful. Why, in old Nick's name, then,

am *I* so miserably cross and peevish? Why do I feel (for I certainly *do*) like sneering, and snarling, and snapping, and damning eyes, and pulling noses? I could pour forth a perfect volley of oaths and objurgations this very minute—on the very slightest provocation, I could call my best friend a puppy, fool, scoundrel—it would be the easiest thing in the world for me, now, to throw these breakfast things, books, and chairs, out of the window, and myself after them. Bah! what a savage. I should like to cut the throats of ten thousand sheep—I should relish the job amazingly—I could see a hundred pirates all strung up in a row, and laugh at them—hurrah for a second edition of the Massacre of the Innocents—I'd give a couple of guineas on the spot, to see it. I would not raise a finger now, no, not I, to save the whole earth, and all which it inherit, from going to the dogs within this hour. Oh, that the centrifugal force were withdrawn, forthwith, from this abominable planet, and that the whole concern would go to destruction, post-haste—ay, be driven with headlong rush, and dash, and crash, right against the sun's flinty ribs, and so be shivered into ten million million atoms—yes, all of us, men, women, children, beasts, fishes, fowls, domes, spires, towers, towns, mountains, groves, meadows, vine-

yards, olive-yards, orchards, all, all, all. Oh, dear, what wicked, what silly fancies are these whims of a sick man—oh, no, I am no such truculent wretch at heart—'tis these nerves that are to blame for this, these good for nothing, unstrung nerves of mine. And is it any wonder? Did I get a wink, a solitary wink of blessed sleep, all through the livelong night? no, not one. There I lay, tossing, and tumbling, and groaning—imploping heaven to grant me even the least little paltry cat-nap—in vain, 'twas not to be had—and, pray, why was I thus refused, thus defrauded of life's choicest blessing? What had I done, to be thus tormented? Had I been an usurper and a murderer, like Macbeth, there would have been some meaning in the thing—had I even had the "raging tooth," which kept that respectable man, Iago, awake, I might have been reconciled to it—but to feel neither the sting of remorse nor of downright physical pain, and yet to be condemned to this horrible sleeplessness, is it not too bad? Oh, brethren, sisters, friends, is it any wonder that I feel this morning like a child of wrath—that I feel like calling names, and throwing stones, and smashing crockery? Two or three more such nights, and I shall positively go mad. As it is, reason can hardly hold the reins—can hardly preserve order and de-



cency in this rascally microcosm of mine—out upon it—away with it. Would that I were dead and turned to dust—yes, dust. I should like, now, to be blown into the eyes, and invade the nostrils, of some crusty old bachelor, 'twould do my poor ghost good to hear him rail and blaspheme. I will no longer be served thus—if there be any virtue in alcohol, or laudanum, or ether, or chloroform, I'll have it out—I'll have one good, long, sound, sweet sleep, if I die for it. Welcome, dear drugs, kind friends and comforters, welcome! But stop, stop, rash man, beware, *are* they friends? Oh, no, no, no; meddle not with them, be not beguiled by them, there is no true friendship in them, they are dangerous allies at best, servants that easily become masters, and when masters, grinding, crushing tyrants. Take care, sell not thy free-born soul to such intolerable slavery as this—pretty business, truly, for the lord of creation to become rum's thrall, opium's bond-slave—better lie awake through all eternity, than come to this—far, far better never to have been born—the meanest weed that rots, the vilest reptile that crawls, is a king in comparison—no, no, have nothing to do with these fair-faced traitors, these fascinating devil's mixtures—and, now, out, out into the air—sit here no longer, fret-

ting and grunting—run, jump, straddle old Methusaleh, and gallop away like ten thousand Quixotes, or go into the orchard, and don't come out till you have climbed every blessed pippin-bearer in it—anything, anything to set this vile blood in circulation—away with you!

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THE same miserable tale to tell to-day—no sleep, just such another wretched, tumultuous, villanous night of it. I certainly did nothing, so far as I know, to earn it—I did not insult my stomach by over-eating or over-drinking—I took moderate exercise—I avoided all disagreeable topics of conversation, or of thought—I read no exciting or brain-tasking books—I heard no painful news—I retired at a seasonable hour—I said my prayers—I closed my eyes—I lay quiet and hopeful in my bed; but no, 'twas all of no use—wide, wide awake—I turned over—I whistled—I counted, first very slow, then faster, then as fast as I could rattle—in vain—then I thought of Sancho Panza, then of the Fat Boy, then I repeated Wordsworth's sleep sonnet—pah, what a miserable failure *that* was—then I went through a variety of solemn and elaborato mesmeric mani-

pulations—horrible humbug—I was wider awake than ever—then I tried to imagine myself at———’s church, listening to one of his prosiest sermons—they certainly have done wonders, in their day, in that way—yes, they have been prescribed by skillful physicians, and with great benefit to the patient, in cases where “poppy and mandragora, and all the drowsy syrups of the world” have failed—why did I not have one at my bedside? What a comfort it might have been to me—then I thought of long bills and dreary answers in chancery, of treasury statistics, assessment rolls, old directories and receipt books, annuity tables, and tables of logarithms, and of every other dismal, leaden document under Heaven; but all, all in vain—then my temper began to leave me—I muttered, I swore, I ground my teeth, I kicked the bed clothes right and left, I dashed my feet through the footboard, I pounded my pillow with my fists, I sprang out of bed in my wrath, I paced the room in utter despair, I tore my hair, I rushed to the window, I almost jumped out, I shook my fist at the silver moon and the bright stars, I went to my razor-case—took out my razor—brandished the glittering blade before my throat—with a cold shudder, returned it to its place—plunged once more into bed, half sobbing, half

cursing—then I prayed God to relieve me, once and for ever, of this horrible load of consciousness—gradually I became calm again—still wide, wide awake—oh, how every sound smote upon my ear, even the murmuring of the wind, and the whispering of the leaves, and the rippling of the river, things that should lull and soothe, only teased and distressed me—then the infernal ticking of the clock, and the barking of the dogs, and the rats squealing and capering overhead—yes, every chirp of every cricket, every nibble of every marauding mouse, seemed to conspire against my peace—so I lay, poor vigil-keeping wretch, till dawn; then the insolent cocks began to crow—confound them, they had had their pleasant naps on their snug roosts, and were as bright as buttons—presently the impertinent birds began to sing—no wonder—what a snug cozy time they had had of it, all night, sound as roaches, in their soft woolly nests—a merry morning, and a happy day for *them*; but for me, poor miserable devil, what sort of a morning have I had, and what sort of a day do I look forward to? And do you wonder that I growl? How can you expect me to be rational or placable?—a philosopher or a Christian? Instead of reproving, give me credit for not making a perfect Nero of myself—if

you but knew with what difficulty I refrain, this very minute, from hurling this boot-jack at yonder mirror—yes, at your own head, you'd pity my hard case, instead of indulging in these ill-timed remonstrances. Tell me to be thankful, forsooth, for such an infernal existence as this? Poh—poh—what judge so cruel as to sentence a criminal to it—Blackwell's Island is a treat to it—Sing Sing an Elysium—oh dear—oh Lord—faith, faith—patience, patience—oh, let me repeat, let me dwell upon, let me take to heart these precious words—let me think, too, of the sufferings of others—think of the thousands of poor wretches around me, the offspring of ignorance and shame, who are born, live, and die in the midst of filth and rags and oaths and crimes—is not my lot, hard as it is, a princely one compared with theirs? Think, too, of those noble fellows, not many, to be sure, but still, thank Heaven, a few, in all ages that the sun has ever shone upon, who have cheerfully given up Time, Property, Health, Life itself, to their country, or their faith—and shall I then make all this noise and ado about the loss of a little sleep? Shall I fall to cursing, because of a few uncomfortable sensations in this poor brain and these paltry nerves of mine? True, true—but then these gallant brethren of ours

had a glorious cause to sustain them—they had something worth fighting and dying for—a noble struggle, and well-earned victory, and a radiant crown, were theirs ; to be a martyr to one's faith is one thing—to be a martyr to the gout is another—but to be the victim of such a shabby, contemptible disease as mine, that dares not show itself, but goes sneaking about my system like a thief, for ever dodging the doctors, is there any glory or honor about that ? I can almost imagine it a privilege, to give up the ghost, in a handsome, dignified way, on the field of battle, fighting for one's country—but to slip and fall upon the pavement and so be run over and crushed beneath the wheels of some vile swill cart, what is there grand or consoling in such a fate ? Pah—what a savory similitude—what a sweet flower of rhetoric is this—enough, enough—a truce to these idle fancies, these desultory mutterings—better be listening to the singing of that tea-kettle—yes, the crackling of thorns under a pot is perfect melody and wisdom, compared to the vile thoughts that keep continually rising to my lips—silence then—silence—hold your peace, man—read your paper, take your tea, and hope for better luck to-night.

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OH, how much better to-day—thank the Lord! I feel like another man. Sleep, that so capriciously deserted me, came back with as little reason; yes, balmy, refreshing, renovating sleep. I hardly know myself this morning—everything looks cheerful and hopeful—the face of nature, the countenances of my brethren seem full of smiles and kindness—ah, what lovely, what fragrant flowers—delicious—with what decided, emphatic relish did I plunge my nose into that great blushing rose—oh, let me be grateful for such a treat: yesterday I would not have looked at it—everything was dull and dismal then—nothing in nature or art could have interested me—I would not have raised my eyes to have beheld the sublimest peaks of Switzerland, no, nor the orchards of the Hesperides themselves, in full bloom, nor Raphael's sybils, nor Guido's dainty Aurora, nor the fair front of the Pantheon, nor the sublime dome of St. Peter's; now, I could gaze and gaze, hour after hour, upon their glorious, their ravishing beauty. Ah, what volume is that which stares me so reproachfully in the face? yes—yes, 4th Kent, the Law of Real Property—not to-day, not to-day, dear Chancellor, I have not pluck enough for that—reason is too much of an invalid yet for so long and dreary a journey—let fancy have the floor

to-day—yes, 'twill be some time, I fear, ere my poor understanding will venture on such barren wastes as Littleton, and Coke, and Hargrave, and Fearne, and Butler, and Preston; or even upon the comparatively “celestial, flowery lands” of Blackstone and Kent; no, I will not bother my poor brain to-day, nor to-morrow either, with Remainders and Devises, Uses and Trusts, Fines and Recoveries, and the rest of your metaphysical mysteries. Besides, what's the use of my stowing away all this learned lumber in my attic? Am I not a resident of the great Empire State? And has not our Sovereign Legislature, with one fell blow of its broom, consigned all these fine-spun cobwebs to kingdom come? And will they not soon be brushed aside wherever they exist? Why waste my time, then, in trying to unravel them? I might as well spend the day in carving baskets out of cherry stones—as well turn cloistered monk at once, and waste my life in making calvaries, and painting prayer-books, and moulding saints in wax. What, when there is so much really entertaining and useful and necessary knowledge to be picked up all around me, shall I turn my brain into an old curiosity shop? no, the sooner these legal subtleties go by the board, the better; let them slumber in the dust, alongside of



Alchymy, and Astrology, and Heraldry, and Controversial Theology; better be lying under the trees, and watching the gambols of the squirrels, and listening to singing birds, and purling brooks, than to sit puzzling over such dreary mysteries. I would not give a single Act of *As You Like It*, for all the theological controversies that were ever heard or written; no, no, no, *Elia* for my money to-day, or *Anastasius*, or the *Inconstant*, or the *School for Scandal*; something sparkling, brilliant, piquant; something that will refresh the brain, and set the wits in sprightly motion. A speech from Choate now—ah, wouldn't it be delightful? One of his foaming, glittering, bubbling, dazzling, rainbow-hued speeches; light, frothy, pungent, full of fixed air and exhilaration. I do not ask for the deep tones, the weighty thoughts, the majestic wisdom of a Webster. I could not appreciate or enjoy them to-day, but the other would suit me to a charm; alas, no such treat is in store for these poor ears. Well, I may at least regale my eyes and nose again with this exquisite bouquet—blessings on the kind hand that brought this charming company together—but one sight on earth more charming—a cluster of young, and innocent, and bright-eyed girls—oh dear, what right has such a

scamp as I to enjoy this privilege? Who can doubt, who dare deny the goodness of his God, after seeing such a beautiful sight as this? Who dare grumble at the workings of his providence? Oh, how kindly, how munificently has he dealt with us; suppose he had cut us off from all these things; suppose he had not planted a single flower on the face of the earth; suppose, after building the mountains, laying out the plains, and defining the bounds of ocean, that he had made man alone, leaving out all other animals; that he had given him one or at most two sorts of plain fare to keep him alive, and had stopped there, and pronounced it good. Even then, would we have had any good excuse for murmuring and rebellion? But when he has thrown in all these ten thousand little delicate attentions and acts of kindness, has lavished all these exquisite gifts upon us, when he has treated, and does treat us, every day, as fond parents treat their children at Christmas, oh, how *can* we be the ungrateful sinners that we are? Suppose again, that this atmosphere had merely ministered to our necessities, and not to our sense of beauty; what would have become of this fine show of gorgeous clouds—this endless succession of brilliant sunrises and golden sunsets; where would

the rainbows have been, and the auroras, and the beautiful effects of moonlight? We might have been cut off, too, with sand and stones, a few rocks, and possibly a little iron hid away beneath them—why, why throw in the gold, and the silver, and the rich-veined marbles, and the diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, pearls, and all manner of precious, lovely things? Why were we not confined to one kind of grain, or one sort of berry, instead of this prodigal display of luscious fruits, and tender roots, and savory herbs? How dare I scold, and regret, and repine at my lot, when I think of all these luxuries and delicacies and beauties innumerable—when I think of the glowing cheek of the peach, the fragrance of the rose, the stately plumes of the ostrich, the sweet song of the nightingale—when I think of prattling brooks, and sparkling waterfalls, and gently gliding rivers, and the dancing waves of ocean? Nay, I have but to look at the delicate, glancing gold-fish in yonder vase, to know and to feel, not merely the power and wisdom, but the unspeakable goodness of my Creator. Why then so ungrateful? why so prone to hard thoughts, and harsh words, and angry passions? Oh, let me try to repent and reform. Down, down upon thy knees, raise thy hands to heaven and swear,

solemnly swear, that another sun shall not rise and find thee the same that thou art now; be more patient, and submissive, and forgiving, and self-forgetful and mindful of others—imitate this heavenly bounty—spare not of thy counsel to the ignorant, of thy purse to the needy, of thy sympathy to the sorrowing—sit not here sighing, and chiding, and hugging thy complaints, and cursing thy unlucky stars; but go forth and relieve the distresses of thy neighbor—try that remedy—the great Physician himself hath prescribed it—up then and away—change the whole current of thy thoughts, the whole tenor of thy life. Do so, man, now, now, or hide thy head in shame for ever.

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AH me, after all the fine talk, the brave words of yesterday, I find myself the same miserable sinner to-day. How easy is it to make confessions; but to set in earnest about the work of reformation, *that* task seems to be quite beyond me. I can pour forth legions of regrets, myriads of promises, but not a solitary finger do I lift, or seem likely to lift, in the blessed cause of amendment. Out upon such horrible infatuation. Awake, man, awake. Have you

no heart left? no strength of purpose, no energy of will? Why, why thus given over to this inertness, listlessness, despondency? Is it mere bodily sickness that affects you thus? or is it a sickly fastidiousness, or a fear of opinion, or shameful sloth, or downright depravity, or a mixture of them all? The cause, alas, I hardly know; but the effect, the miserable effect, I both know and feel. I feel too, that if I do not make some desperate effort to escape, and that right suddenly, I shall never be released from this vile thralldom. Well then, begin—begin this blessed day—now that your nerves are somewhat restored, your health improved, your wits clarified, go at the glorious work forthwith; ay, but there stands Satan, grinning and leering at me, and urging me by all that is unholy to take the other track—he would have me spend this quiet sunshiny day in some unprofitable, abominable manner; he would have me exhaust my poor pennyworth of health and strength over the bottle, or the card-table, or something equally vile and ruinous. Out upon the crafty, cursed fiend! Why do I not turn upon him, then, like a good Christian, and with a withering rebuke, send him packing to the hell from whence he came? Why sit thus silent and motionless, like the poor fascinated bird, at the mercy of the serpent?

Have I no arm or voice to raise in my defence? Away, vile tempter, foul enemy of my peace, away, away! Ah dear—what have we here? a letter from ——; yes, another of those infamous scrawls of his. Hang me if I can make anything out of it—not one word in fifty can I even guess at—confound the man, what right has he to try my temper, and trifle with my time in this way? it is unbecoming, insulting. What would he say if I were to pay him a visit in my shirt sleeves? I see no difference—one is as great a sin against good breeding as the other—no, not one word can I decipher; nor do I believe the man breathes that *can* puzzle it out—Champollion himself would have bowed himself out of such a task—yes, he would have sooner ventured on a score of obelisks, and with far better prospects of success. What sort of reply can I make to such a production? Here goes—“Sir, your, I cannot call it, favor of a date which I am unable to decipher, has been received. After bending over it for three mortal hours, I find that I have an aching head, lame shoulders, and an impaired temper for my pains. In profound ignorance of its contents, I consign it to the flames—anything viva voce I will listen to cheerfully—your misused friend P. S. Fortunately I have your address, for the old boy him-

self never could have made it out." There, if he is disposed to quarrel about the matter, he's welcome to: I consider him the aggressor, not myself. Plague take it, I have no doubt the thing was well worth reading—the man *talks* admirably—he's as clear as a bell, fluent as a mill-race—his ideas are beautifully developed, charmingly arranged. It is a positive treat to listen to him—the more the pity, that he should make such frightful work of it on paper. He would be a bold boy, who would venture to present such a terrible exhibition in the way of pot-hooks and hangers to his master. Whew! what a sound, searching, satisfactory, thoroughly-earned thrashing would be his portion. Suppose this precious piece of penmanship had been a will; now, what a time of it the legatees and lawyers would have had among them—what a waste of words, ink, time, money, temper; blood, perhaps, would have grown out of it. Where would our liberties have been, this day, had the signers of the immortal Declaration subscribed their names in this villanous fashion? How beautifully appropriate, too, would such a hand have looked in Washington's Farewell Address, or his Army Accounts. How it would have set off the Fairy Queen, or the Paradise Lost. Would the divine author have received even the ten paltry

pounds he did, for such a looking MS.? no, not as many pennies—no amount of genius can atone for such atrocities. Had the all-glorious Shakspeare himself only condescended to have written a decent hand, how many of those furious, windy controversies between pig-headed commentators would have been spared us, that now so annoy and disgust the student—yes, what a world of annoyances, great and small, have these scrawlers been at the bottom of—one loses one's patience to think of it.

To add to the vexations of the day, I have had a call from that terrible old bore and humbug, ———. He is very anxious, it seems, about the salvation of my soul—he is shaking in his shoes, he says, on my account—and so forth and so forth. Now any intelligent, bona fide regard for my spiritual well-being, manifested in a becoming manner, and at the right time, I certainly ought to receive with respect—but as to the cant and stuff of this impertinent old hunks, it is quite intolerable. Among other interesting statements, he said, that he himself had once been the chief of sinners. Hang such impudent presumption—chief of sinners, forsooth! the idea that such an obscure nobody as he, with scarce a salt-spoonful of brains in his miserable noddle, should dare call himself the Generalissimo of the Grand Army of



sinners—is it not monstrous? it were a good deal for Richard the Third himself to say, or Henry the Eighth, or Cæsar Borgia, or Nero—but for such an ineffably small light as —— to pervert language in this way, it is too ridiculous—back, man, back—slink back to your true place in the ranks—meanest of sinners, when you *were* a sinner—smallest of saints, if you *are* a saint—but I doubt you. You are quite too fond of your money-bags, for a good Christian—you had better be looking out for number one—see to your own pin-point of a soul, and let mine take care of itself—impertinent old fool—how *could* the servant have let him in—it has completely spoiled my day and my temper—oh, how cross and bitter I feel—'twould take precious little to put me in a frenzy—yes, the merest trifle on earth would make me blow out in a way that wicked old Kidd himself would blush to hear, were he by. Ah, I had better go to bed—that's the safest place for me—and if to sleep, why all the better—and if I never wake up, better still. Pray, what is such a life as mine worth? If I *should* hang on a few years longer, what would it all amount to? I should wear out a few more boots, to be sure—read a few more newspapers—take down a barrel or two more of pills, probably—that would be pretty much the substance of it. Heigh-ho! If I

could only be sure now, of a nice comfortable nap, a quarter of a century long—such as Rip Van Winkle had, and then wake up at the end of it, as fresh and bright as he was shabby and rusty—would not it be charming? Well, well, no wishing and grumbling will mend the matter—and so to bed, to bed, to bed.

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OH, what a blustering day; the wind is howling like a pack of hungry wolves; what a clatter, what a bustle everything is in; confound the windows, how they rattle; those poor young trees over the way have as much as they can do to keep their heels from being tripped up. Ah! over goes a poor little youngster of a maple, cut off, slender thing, in the very babyhood of its days. Well, it's all right; no doubt, 'twas so ordered, so written, with other and weightier matters, in the book of destiny; so we go; it's tough little neighbor, there, will very likely fight out the gale, and a great many gales; yes, will be standing there a century hence; possibly my own, surely some of my neighbors', great great great grandchildren, will be frolicking round it some fine morning in the year.

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1950. Where shall *we* be then? ugh! I shiver to think of it. Our poor carcasses, we know, long, long before that day, will have become cold victuals for hungry worms; our poor bones will have quietly settled down into powder; but the undying part; the soul, the conscience, the affections; where will *they* be? ah! dear, dear, dear, the wisest and best of us know but precious little about the matter. Reason, with all her airs and pretensions, her owl-like looks, and solemn head-shakes, her plausible conjectures and dashing theories, has mighty little to say in the way of satisfaction or comfort—Revelation, blessed thing that it is, is nevertheless amazingly sparing in its statements about the future life—a few vague facts are told us, a few dark hints thrown out, nothing further, no details—the when, and where, and how—not a word, not a word on these points—and yet these are questions which it seems the most natural thing in the world to ask; children *are* asking them continually; tell me, tell me, where *shall* I be, when this poor breath has taken leave of this miserable body? Alas, that good book, that dear venerable quarto yonder, with all its glorious messages, its glad tidings of great joy, will not condescend to answer me; well, well 'tis wisely so decreed; why then bother my poor head about the

matter? I shall soon find out—why tease and harass my enfeebled wits with these terrible riddles? no, no, my poor brain is in quite too unseaworthy a condition to venture out on these speculative voyages. Gracious, how the wind keeps it up; how the dust flies; the clouds are hurrying and tumbling along the sky, as if old Nicholas himself were after them. Ah, there goes a magnificent cluster; were I one of those old Flemish artists, now, I would be stopping those fellows, and painting their interesting portraits. Wouldn't they look superbly, crowning one of Ruysdael's rich wooded landscapes, or Vandervelde's sparkling, spirited sea pieces? They would certainly look far more appropriate in their pictures than they do here, sailing over this huge mass of bricks and mortar. Away they go, and their shadows after them, scudding over the rooftops; there was a blast for you; from the convulsive movements of my fellow-citizens in the streets, I should say that it was pretty tough navigating against this wind; to keep one's legs, even, seems positively to be an enterprise of great pith and moment. Ah, what dignified personage is that, speeding along before the blast? he is evidently going a *trifle* faster than he thinks consistent with his commanding appearance and lofty social position; he

looks a general, or bishop, or judge, at the least; but rude Borcas is no respecter of persons, and is certainly taking most unwarrantable liberties with the skirts of his coat; our friend would certainly show to more advantage now in the desk, or on the bench, than he does at this particular juncture; holloa, there goes his hat, and, by Jupiter, his wig after it; this is too bad; what is the poor man to do? it will clearly not be the thing for a person of his majesty of mien and manner to run, or even shout after the fugitives; is there no warm-hearted Irishman about, or stray policeman? it seems not; our friend gazes for a moment with a bewildered air, then beats a hasty retreat into a neighboring house; how that jade of a servant girl is laughing as she opens the door; who can blame her? Ah, I should like to hear his apologies and explanations to the family; a rich scene, no doubt. Meanwhile, a young ragged scoundrel has pounced upon both hat and wig; he will, at least, make an effort to return them to their owner; not he, in faith; off he goes, like Jehu, with the spoils; holloa, there; stop thief; the young scamp; he'll, no doubt, be sporting that magnificent beaver this very night, in some low cock-pit or other; very likely it will be knocked over his eyes by some brother ragamuffin, while

cursing and fighting about the ownership of some rascally stump of a segar ; “to what base uses may we come, Horatio ;” it makes me sad to think of it ; yet what a very funny, absurd affair it was ; Heraclitus himself would have grinned, had he witnessed it. How *could* he have helped it ; is it not an essentially, supremely ridiculous spectacle, to behold the habitual wearer of a wig suddenly deprived thereof, be it by an unmannerly puff of wind, or by the mischievous hand of childhood ? Can any moral worth on the part of him who is thus uncereemoniously laid bare, or any intellectual preëminence, or any loftiness of station, prevent our having a good, hearty, glorious laugh at his expense ? no, assuredly not ; now and then, a thing *will* turn up, so intrinsically ludicrous, that, seasonable or unseasonable, right or wrong, there is no running away from it ; laugh we must, or give up the ghost. Who could control himself, for instance, when ——— found that sow in his pew, on that famous Sunday morning ? How the old creature ever got there was always a mystery ; it was supposed that the heat of the weather had entrapped the Sexton into an unlucky nap, during which the veteran street-walker had probably straggled in, and so blundered up the middle aisle, coming to anchor in the aforesaid pew. Who,

that was present, can ever forget the scene that occurred when the discovery was made? such poking, and pulling, and kicking, and squealing, and grunting, ending, after much delay, in the forcible expulsion of the intruder; it was altogether too much for the nerves of the congregation; after many laudable efforts to hold in, it was found of no use, nature would have her way, a hearty laugh arose from all present, effectually driving away all impressiveness and solemnity from the sanctuary; the clergyman himself could not resist the contagion; the sacred desk fairly shook with peals of uncontrollable laughter; seeing the turn that things had taken, like a sensible man, he immediately dismissed us, stating, as he did, with some difficulty, that after what had transpired, it was quite out of the question to get through the services of the morning in the right spirit; oh, Lord! it makes me snicker to think of it, even now. Well, well, well, let's laugh while we can; heaven knows there's enough to cry about, in this strange world of ours. What a world, what a frightful, complicated mass it is, of all sorts of mysteries; nay, the experience of a single day, to a man of any reflection or sensibility, what a terrible jumble it seems of conflicting thoughts, feelings, occurrences. What *does* it all mean? Who

can unravel this tangled skein? Who can explain the morale, or the rationale of all these strange phenomena, in ourselves, and in things about us? An hour ago, it was high tragedy with me, and now 'tis broad farce; then, there was a meaning, a dignity, a solemnity in life and all that belongs to it; then I felt like a rational, accountable being, with glorious faculties to be developed, with high aims for me to accomplish, and a lofty destiny in store; now, everything seems a mere harlequinade; I'd as lief be the clown in the ring as the king on his throne; as lief be that bawling, begrimed charcoal vender in the street yonder, as the great champion of the constitution himself. Why this absurd transition, this pitiful inconsistency? Why am I, one moment, full of faith and hope, disposed to look upon the bright side of men and things, cheerful, resigned to whatever may happen, ay, ready to meet the hardest blows of fortune, with the calm submissiveness, the placid smile of a martyr, and the very next minute, perhaps, cursed with abominable thoughts, silly fancies, vile appetites, tumultuous passions? Why, why is this frightful war for ever going on within us? A little while ago, I felt like an intellectual being, eager to learn, delighted to grapple with any difficulties in art or science; ready to climb the diz-



ziest heights of mathematics, or to explore the dreariest labyrinths of law ; now, I shrink back from the simplest sum in the arithmetic. Out upon such ridiculous incongruities, such vile weaknesses ! And then, again, what frightful inequalities, what strange anomalies, what horrible casualties, do we see perpetually occurring in the world without us ; how inexplicable, how overwhelming at times ! Yonder goes a man rolling in wealth and luxury ; he was born to it ; he will doubtless die, surrounded by it. When he departs, they will put him in a sumptuous coffin, shining like a mirror, and as richly lined as was ever lady's boudoir ; they will give him a stately funeral, and solemn funeral rites ; and so they will send him to his long home, with a grand flourish of drums and trumpets ; fulsome obituaries will be served up in his honor, and in due time, a gaudy monument will rise over his remains, in some fashionable rural cemetery. The poor fellow that ran against him just now, and whom he cursed so, what a different time he has had of it in this world, and is likely to have ; that moving mass of rags began to draw breath in some dark den of shame and infamy ; a penniless, friendless vagabond from the beginning, thus far he has been kicked and cuffed along the highway of life, and he

looks as if he expected to be kicked and cuffed up to the closing scene; the terminus of his sad pilgrimage, most probably, a prison or the gallows; no funeral ceremonies will be thrown away upon *his* poor carcass, no tear be shed over it, no grave receive it; no, 'twill be chopped up in some profane dissecting room, most likely, for the edification of a set of noisy students, who will crack their vile jokes, and puff their filthy tobacco smoke over it, in mockery—oh, can it be, that these two men are the children of the same Heavenly Parent, alike creatures of his care, alike heirs of immortality, alike responsible at his bar? Why, why then permit such terrible, such cruel disparities of condition at the very outset of their career? Why continue them thus pertinaciously to the close? Why, again, these frightful inequalities as to endowments? There goes a man across the street, with a bundle on his head—it is his calling—he is equal to no other—his head is only *fit* to balance bundles on—education can do nothing for him—he has been tried and found wanting—there is nothing there to educate—you could no more educate that man into a respectable merchant or competent lawyer, than you could by culture convert a squash into a cluster of delicious grapes—yes, and the very next person

that you see there, following at his heels, but who knows him not? Who knows not that capacious brow, those eyes that flash glorious fire, that tongue which sends forth its winged words, whose burning eloquence sets the hearts of a whole nation in a blaze? Why, oh why, is our Father in heaven so prodigal of his good gifts to the one, and so cruelly sparing of them to the other? Why, again, put *one* immortal soul in a poor, paltry, contemptible body, with scarce a sound organ in it, a perpetual source of disquiet and pain to its owner, yes, a continual stumbling-block in his path, while another is endowed with a glorious set of nerves and muscles, a magnificent pair of lungs, and all other appurtenances that can minister to its wants and delights? Oh, is it fair? Why does one man prosper in all his undertakings, everything he touches turning to gold, his very blunders even having a happy issue, while his neighbor, equally amiable, more intelligent, perhaps, is for ever in hot water, cheated by crafty villains, worried out of his life by hard-hearted creditors, and dying at last a poor desolate bankrupt? Why is one fair island blessed with all that a land *can* be blessed with; made the seat of wealth, power, art, science, civilization, while its neighboring sister, equally lovely by *nature*, is yet

cursed with every evil under the sun?—is become the Head Quarters of Wretchedness, Famine, Death? Why permit these things? Why, too, permit so much innocent suffering in the world? Why *should* all these poor wives and children undergo sorrow, poverty, ignominy, for the misdeeds of husbands and fathers? Why allow one man's drunkenness, or incompetence, to send hundreds of souls to their account, without a moment's warning? Why allow the insane ambition of another to bring thousands and thousands to an untimely end upon the battle-field? Why, too, all these dire accidents—these famines, floods, pestilences, shipwrecks, earthquakes, conflagrations? What *do* they mean? What lesson *do* they teach? Who can decipher them? Oh dear, what child cannot ask these questions? What sage can answer them satisfactorily? Who is not tempted at times, when pondering over these terrible mysteries, to become desperate, and unbelieving, and reckless? One is almost disposed to ask, can it be, that God is actually watching over this world of ours? Hath he not abandoned the charge to underlings; to a set of neglectful angels, who are either slumbering on their posts, or have deserted them? Why then worry my head about the matter? Why not let things

take their course? Of what consequence is it, the life I lead, or the death I die? Why care to preserve Law and Order in this little world within, when I see everything at sixes and sevens in the great world without? Why care to be wise? What does wisdom bring its owner, but a clouded brow, and sunken cheeks, and hairs white before their time? No, let's laugh and be jolly—let's drink, dance, fool, fiddle away our lives, and let Reason and Conscience go hang. A precious conclusion to come to, to be sure—and yet, who does not at times give way to such rascally feelings? Or rather, who *does* struggle with them as he ought? Are not the lives of most men a virtual endorsement of these horrible notions? Oh, away with them, irrational, sinful, perilous that they are—there *is*, there *is* a meaning, a deep hidden wisdom in these arrangements of Providence, though our poor feeble wits cannot fathom it—there *is* a key to these dread puzzles—an answer to these soul vexing riddles—not here—the blessed life to come will answer all these questions—oh, without that faith, that hope, existence were a miserable, dreary farce indeed—meanwhile, are we, because thus ignorant and in the dark, to break out into rebellion? To throw Reason and Conscience overboard, and let

the vile crew of appetites and passions take command of the ship? Oh, no, no, poor children that we are, we must obey, not question the orders of our Parent—scholars, we are to learn the lessons which the Great Teacher sets us, not set up a course for ourselves—a pretty idea, truly, that we babies, in this infant school of our existence, should array our little silly notions in opposition to the plans of the great Governor of the Universe—better submit, without useless noise or scuffling, to the discipline prescribed—how absurd, too, to be kicking and pounding, in this petulant way, against the door which the Master hath closed and barred against us—we cannot enter—we are wasting breath and temper, neglecting our tasks, and earning a hearty whipping for our pains. Alas, alas! the most puzzling and painful part of the problem of life still keeps staring us in the face. Oh, why, why is it, that with such clear convictions of duty, with Reason, Conscience, Interest, all uniting to point out the right path, we will obstinately stick to the wrong one? Why is it so much more natural, easy, congenial to our feelings, to be wicked than to be good?—to be earthly, sensual, devilish, than to be pure, and spiritual, and heavenly minded? Why is it, that for *one* bona fide, handsome victory over the

evil one, we must plead guilty to a hundred disgraceful, ignominious defeats? Is it not so? There may be a lucky handful, with whom it is otherwise, but are not an overwhelming majority of us just such infatuated beings? Have we not been so from the start? Only think of the frightful accumulation of evil thoughts, words, actions, that has been going on, from the creation till now; contrast it with that meager heap of offerings to virtue—Olympus to a mole-hill. Why was it so decreed? Why was it not rendered more easy, more agreeable to our propensities, to do right? Why has Satan been allowed such authority, such fatal influence over our hearts? Why is he permitted to run away with so much of the wit, beauty, energy, talent of the world? Why were not these gifts consecrated to the cause of goodness? We do not ask to be mere puppets, propelled, willing or unwilling, along the path to Heaven; that would render life a stupid, vapid affair, indeed—the dullest of all dull panoramas—but why compel us to fight against such terrible odds? But how unwise, how wicked it is to dwell on these questions—such are the decrees of Infinite Wisdom, and we must submit.—Why murmur then? Why indulge a vain spirit of curiosity, that may not be gratified? We cannot

render the devil a more acceptable service, than by lingering and grumbling over these matters—better take to our weapons forthwith—else we are surely lost. Besides, terrible as the chances against us seem, numerous as the victims are that are falling around us, the day is nevertheless ours, if we will it so to be—if we go into the conflict, with all our hearts and souls, and strengths—no more vain words then—no more idle questions, but go forth and meet the adversary, hopefully, manfully, and a noble victory, a radiant crown of glory, shall be yours.

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WHAT a lovely morning—but I am in no mood to appreciate it—I am quite too miserable and good-for-nothing to relish this sweet sunshine, this balmy breeze—I seem to be without any vigor, either of mind or body—my poor wits are of no use to me at all—wayward fancies have taken possession of my brain, and Reason has not strength enough to drive away the intruders—as to study, that is quite out of the question—I cannot pursue a solitary train of thought, faithfully, to any rational result—no progress whatever am I making, in any branch of



knowledge—ah dear! I look up at that library yonder, and my heart sickens within me—I may not enter, I may not explore that storehouse of learning, that treasury of wisdom—did not the doctor, this very morning, in language the most emphatic, and with a hearty thump of his fist upon my table, forbid it? Well, well, be it so—I must be satisfied to be an ignoramus, a nobody—and yet, it is pretty hard to have to turn one's back for ever on such a goodly company—there are some choice spirits upon those old shelves—there's Goethe and Schiller and Dante and Boccaccio and Cervantes and Moliere. Dear old Homer's there too, and Virgil and Horace and Cicero and Demosthenes and the glorious tragedians. What troops of English and American friends, too—wits, poets, essaysits, dramatists, historians. Philosophers, too, and statesmen, and jurists, and divines of all denominations—and may I never again have the privilege of an hour's interview with any of these worthies? never again set at the feet of these great teachers, and drink in their words of wisdom? Is life worth having, on such conditions? What, must I abstain henceforth from tasting this pure nourishing mental food, and nibble away at newspapers, and such small talk as I can pick up in streets and parlors? or, at best, snatch a hasty innutritious

meal at churches or lecture-rooms, or mass-meetings, or theatres? How can a soul grow and thrive on such sorry fare? But why grumble? I am fit for nothing better—the doctor's right—I have no business here, amongst these bards and sages and orators—this poor brain is quite unequal to such excitements. If I persist in them, I shall become a hopeless cripple, perhaps lose my poor wits altogether. Away, then, away—why linger here another moment? I ought now to be out, scowering the streets, tumbling over boxes, bales, hogsheads, pricing rum and sugar and cotton, discussing Bank Stocks and Government Loans, and ship news, and rates of Exchange, and such matters—that's what my brethren are all about—they are astonished that I should want to be locked up here amongst these books. They'd as lief be sent to Sing Sing, as be compelled to pass two consecutive days in this little Sanctum of mine—they may be right; and yet, to me, it is the most fascinating spot on earth, even now, when I can no longer enjoy or profit by its treasures. But away, away—don't sit here, inviting wretchedness and imbecility—any exercise, any employment, I care not what, sooner than such a miserable state of things as this—better be opening oysters, or selling cabbage, or accumulating soap-fat, all day long

—anything, anything that will work a revolution in this outer man of mine. Oh, shall I ever know what it is to have a pair of rosy cheeks, and a strong arm, and a good stomach? What is wit or learning worth without them? Who would not rather be a garbage-gatherer, in high health, than a neuralgic archbishop? Oh dear—health, health, health—the great blessing of blessings, the foundation of all that is delightful, useful, glorious in life; why, why am I thus defrauded of it? Can it be, that these very books, that I have so idolized, that I now leave with such regret, are at the bottom of all my sufferings? not so—I will not be so ungrateful as to tax them with these rascally feelings. They certainly *have* aggravated them, though. They certainly *have* cheated me out of much wholesome exercise, and sound sleep—have made me hurry down many a meal most villanously. Have they not given this beautiful curve to my shoulders, too? Have they not driven these eyes of mine to spectacles, before their time? Confound them, they *are* greatly to blame in this matter. Now that I look at them again, they have not half the lustre and the dignity they had—all is not gold that glitters—there *is* a great deal of rubbish, trash, humbug, mixed up with that wisdom and beauty—how much real, substantial merit, when

you come to analyze it, is there upon these shelves? How much of it is mere covers and fly-leaves, and title-pages, and blank pages, and errata, and indexes, and tables of contents? How much is fulsome dedications, and needless prefaces, and superfluous notes, and vain repetitions?—oh, how it keeps dwindling and dwindling away—the really solid, weighty, precious thoughts do not occupy a hundredth part of that showy assemblage—yon bulky Encyclopædia, for instance, how much exploded learning it contains: Law and Gospel in its day, but now proved to be unsound, almost worthless; what folly it would be, to plough through all that rubbish; that dainty collection of British Poets there, fifty volumes strong; are there no conceits, puerilities, plagiarisms, is there nothing false, indecent, blasphemous, under those sumptuous bindings? Sift them fairly, thoroughly, and what a frightfully scanty residuum of genuine wit and sound sentiment is left—those goodly rows of law-books, too,—is it all wisdom and Equity, and Truth, that is reposing under those stout buff covers?

Is it presumptuous, irreverent to say that a very large portion of their contents is mere quibbling, and hair-splitting, and word-torturing, and cobweb weaving? That ponderous work upon the Logos,

there—in four plump quartos—is *that* all solid gold? “a gem of purest ray serene,” or not? Is it a privilege, a luxury to read it? Has it done the slightest good in its day and generation, or is it likely to in those that are to follow? Is it a monument of wisdom, or of folly? If of wisdom, what a blind, stupid, unappreciating community has it fallen upon; were it brought to the hammer this night, not all the persuasive eloquence of a Keese could raise a bid for it, unless some stray pastry-cook happened to be present. That Shakspeare, there, in twenty substantial octavos—how much of that vast space does the divine bard himself occupy? not a tenth—the rest is crowded with wordy, windy commentators—what business have they there, smothering the poet alive in this abominable manner? For one single note that sheds any comfortable light upon the text, there are a hundred that are mere exhibitions of spleen, or vanity, or arrogance. Who wants to wade through such trash? one’s time would be far more profitably spent in fishing or shooting. But if it *were* all fine gold, if every page of every one of those books were worth reading, what folly to be bending over them forever—why surrender one’s freedom, even to such masters? Far, far better, to be sure, than an igno-

minious slavery to Rum, or Cards; still, is it not a perversion of one's faculties, a wretched investment of one's time? an abuse, sure to recoil at last upon the head of the transgressor—oh, let me be warned then in time—let me fly from these fatal fascinations—let me go forth and read the great volume which the Lord himself hath written. Why waste all my precious hours on these erring, imperfect transcripts? Why be contented to pick up all my knowledge at second hand? Who so silly as to linger over a picture of Niagara, when the glorious original is at hand? Would he not be a ninny, who would keep kissing the miniature of his mistress, when the sweet lips themselves were by, and smiling upon him? And am I not just such a fool, to stay here, poring over these musty books, when I can see for myself all these fine, and wonderful, and mysterious things in nature, and the heart of man? Let them go, then; were my picture gallery all Claudes, and Salvators, and Coles, I would not be a prisoner in it; give me the veritable blue sky, and the dancing brooks outside; yes, better abandon for ever the society, even of Hamlet and Prospero, even of Rosalind and Imogen, if it is to cut me off from all other—from all intercourse with the wise men, and charming women, and dear children about me.

WHAT a wretched morning I have had of it—thank my own miserable folly therefor. Satan, indefatigable angler for souls, ever on the qui vive for victims, appeared before me, some two hours ago, with a magnificent mint-julep in his claws, got up by one of the most clever and fascinating of his imps, confound him—and I, like a greedy pike, devoured it—sucked it to the dregs; of course I have felt horribly ever since; oh, what inexcusable weakness, what infernal infatuation! What, did I then, for the sake of a little momentary gratification, thus deliberately insult my stomach, oppress my brain, turn myself, for the time, into a perfect numskull? Yes, even so—oh fool, fool, fool—so we go—the same old story, from Adam down—temptation, yielding, misery, ruin—frightful words—on what page of human history are they not to be found? And yet, was I not far more sorely tempted than Adam was? Did any apple ever grow in Eden, one half so seductive as that delicious, that rascally julep? no, no; so fragrant, too, so picturesque, so alluring to eyes, nose, palate—is it strange that I was captivated by it, this warm summer's day? that pyramid of ice, with its rose-colored summit, looking for all the world like an iceberg lighted up by the setting sun—that

charming combination below, of strawberry, and pineapple, and mint, and sugar, and old mellow peach, and venerable cognac—plague take it, who would have believed that such a marvellous specimen of art was of the devil's own handiwork, a snare laid for souls, a smiling traitor? Ah dear, when will a *wholesome* beverage be half so inviting? why are we so cruelly tempted? Even now, in the midst of my sufferings, silly wretch that I am, my fancy *will* keep dwelling on the charms of that insidious poison; nay, I fear, that were the very same temptation presented to me to-morrow, I might be mad enough to fall disgracefully before it. Shame, shame, shame! How can I ever expect to fight my way to the gates of heaven, if I have no more strength of will than this? Alas, I shall never see those blessed gates; I am not hero enough to carry the day; I am too fond of comfort and self-indulgence; I love to have my nerves tickled, my appetites humored; I have no relish for briers, and rocks, and tempests; I *deserve* no crown—no laurels for *these* brows—that shabby nightcap becomes them better; well, well, the great majority of my brethren are quite as bad, as sensual, as selfish; there's a mean kind of consolation in the thought, is there not? If I *am* going to destruction, I go in



a crowd—there can be no doubt of *that*; experience and Scripture both confirm it; the latter is frightfully explicit upon this point—yes, very little of the music and joy of heaven will be made and shared by us poor residents of earth; to whatever extent the inhabitants of other planets may be partakers therein, this vile one of ours will be very slenderly represented there; an unpalatable, discouraging statement, truly, but there it *is*, and we have got to make the best of it. And do not our own guilty, perverse hearts echo back its truth? What *right* have we to future happiness, living and acting as we do? Frightfully mysterious as the arrangement seems, who dare question the righteousness of it? No, whatever my destiny may be, let me at least have the decency not to mutter and grumble over it; what claims have *I*, pray, on my Creator? What good am I doing, that I should be spared, even *here*, much less, rewarded hereafter? What business have I in heaven? a fellow like me, who has no control over his propensities, but who tumbles, most disgracefully, as I did this very morning, into the very first temptation that lies in his path. No, “the economy of heaven is dark,” but who dare say it is unjust? who dare deny that the great mass of men are vile sinners?—that evil

thoughts, words, actions, outnumber the good, even as the pebbles of earth outnumber its diamonds? It is awful to think of the amount of open, unblushing villany that is going on continually in the world; but when we add to it the hundred-fold greater sum of secret crimes and vices—when we think of the multitude of private drunkards, and gluttons, and gamblers, and libertines there are—and liars and slanderers, and scandal-mongers—when we think of the manifold hidden villanies of trade—of the countless falsehoods daily told at counters, false marks, false entries, false manifests—of the abominable tricks, quackeries, rascalities that degrade professional life—when we think of the frightful accumulation of slang, and trash, and filth, and profanity, and bestiality that is for ever going on in all sorts of dark holes and corners—and, saddest of all, when we think of the innumerable meannesses, and pitiful jealousies, and unjust suspicions, and sour looks, and harsh words, that are perpetually marring the comfort of firesides, and poisoning the peace of families; oh is it not enough to make us hide our heads in shame for ever? What a terrible tale every hour has to tell to the recording angel, and *has* told from the beginning; a few good deeds, and kind words, and devout aspirations,

here and there; but, oh, what an overwhelming preponderance of the bad—a pretty set, indeed, to go to heaven—precious company for angels; no, no, not for us the pure and holy joys of paradise; if we are *ever* to partake of them, it can only be after ages of penance and purification—of weeping and sackcloth—how can it be otherwise? How can we evade the solemn requirements of justice?

“It is the eternal law, that were sin is,  
Sorrow and shame must answer it.”

That we can get round it, that we can sneak into heaven, as it were, by means of a miserable death-bed repentance, what folly, what mockery to suppose it. No, the penalty must be paid, and to the full. After all, how profoundly indifferent and reckless most of us seem to be about the matter. So long as we have the use and enjoyment of these dearly beloved senses of ours, we are quite willing to postpone spiritual pleasures indefinitely; and as to spiritual sufferings, why they are generally dismissed with a laugh or a sneer. To be sure, a relative or friend *will* die, now and then, and we may be scared into a little thoughtfulness and self-examination, but it is soon over, and away we go again to the old appetites and employ-

ments; as tyrant Richard, with his drums and trumpets, drowned the voices of an outraged wife and mother, so do we seek relief in the din of business, and the whirl of pleasure, from the remonstrances of reason and conscience. When these bodies turn against us, when they are no longer faithful servants, but have become positive encumbrances and nuisances to ourselves and all about us, then, indeed, it is high time to be alarmed, and to manifest some little interest in the world of spirits; when, at last, the summons to quit comes, "that fell arrest without all bail," when the paws of the monster are upon us, when there is no escape, but go we must, then the dread truth flashes upon us in all its horrors—then the judgment to come has a stern, earnest, terrible reality about it, from which we shrink back in despair. Oh, what a miserable set of cowards, then; how we cling to life; what remedy so loathsome, that we will not submit to it? what quack so vile, that we will not hearken unto him, if we can but have a few weeks, days, hours' respite from this horrible consummation? anything but this—languor, pain, squalor, ignominy, mouldy bread and filthy water in a dungeon; anything under heaven, so we keep this side the grave; but we whine, and plead, and struggle in vain; too late, too late—the day of

reckoning is at hand, the dismal account is about to be unfolded, item after item, even from the beginning—what a black and hideous catalogue—even the *good* man's record hath enough in it to blush and tremble over; even that is quite full enough of blots and stains and shortcomings—but *this* vile scrawl, this tissue of abominations, this foul mass of folly, vanity and vice; oh, what a dreary perspective is here; how the wasted, murdered hours rise up in judgment against us; no wonder that we shudder, and shrink back in dismay from the coming retribution; yes, this hell, which we once cracked so many jokes about, this figure of speech, with which we embroidered our conversations so prettily, is a frightful reality, after all; its horrors are at hand, the unspeakable horrors of remorse; there will be no escape from them, no bowl to fly to, no friendly drug to steep the senses in forgetfulness, no quenching of the faculties, then; they will exist with tenfold life and vigor, and all, alas, turned into so many furies to torment us; pricking and stinging us, as the loathsome past passes before us, in all its terrible details; each day, each hour's guilt confronting and confounding us. What saith the dread record? On such a day, in a fit of savage, causeless wrath, I felled a poor old faithful servant to the earth. On

such a day, my best friend and benefactor was vilely slandered, and I, mean coward, stood silent by ; he died, soon after, a broken-hearted man. On such a day, I poured forth torrents of cruel, biting sarcasms, that sent my poor mother weeping to her bed—planting thorns in *her* pillow, whom I should have died to serve. On such a day, when I *should* have spoken, I uttered not a word, no, though a few kind tones and smiles might have saved that mother's heart from breaking. On such a day—but oh, God, spare us, spare us the remembrance of these horrible things! Can any bigot conjure up a hell more terrible than the gnawing memory of deeds like these? Well may you shudder, guilty, trembling sinner, at the prospect of such tortures close at hand ; no evading them, now ; what, think you, that a few vain confessions, tears, and prayers will pay this frightful debt that has been thus long accumulating? no, no, no. And how long are these torments to last? How long is the poor soul to be thus left to prey upon itself, ere kind mercy interpose? Alas, is it possible that, knowing and feeling these things to be so, I can still go on, day after day, piling error upon error, transgression upon transgression? Even so, just such miserable, infatuated creatures most of us seem to be.

But *are* these things so? Are men thus wicked, deathbeds thus terrible? Is retribution a thing so frightful? Are we all such vile wretches? *Is* trade, then, a mere pack of lies and frauds? Are professional men a mere gang of swindlers and pick-pockets? Is there no high standard of honor and morality in public life? *Are* families so wretched? Are there *no* happy firesides, no loving hearts, no generous impulses in human nature? God forbid, that any man should be found, to utter a thing so absurd and monstrous—there *are*, there *are* good men to be found all about us, in the highways and in the by-ways of life—and pure and lovely women, angels before their time, who go about doing good, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the distressed. “Blessings be on them and eternal praise” therefor. But oh, are there not more, far more unfledged devils around us, certainly amongst the men?—fellows who do their master’s bidding here most faithfully, and who will be amongst his trustiest agents hereafter. Yes, busy, crafty, cursed fiends in hell. I can’t help thinking so, though I shall, no doubt, be called a cynic, and a misanthrope, for expressing such an opinion. Ah, here comes my hearty, jovial friend ———. I wonder what *he* thinks about these things—he certainly does not

look as if he troubled himself much about such speculations—what a bluff, ruddy visaged fellow he is, to be sure—here he comes, puffing away, as usual, at a fragrant Principe—let's see what he has to say upon the subject. But I know what he'll say—he'll only laugh in my face, and call me a blue-skin—he evidently considers such sentiments as mine so much old fashioned Calvinistic cant and humbug; or, at best, a sick man's whims—the Voice of Dyspepsia, not of Truth. He thinks this world a very comfortable, respectable one, and its occupants, on the whole, a pretty decent set of fellows—as to Death, he only dreads it as a means of withdrawing him too soon from the banquet of life—so long as he can get a full meal of this world's pleasures and excitements, he has no notion of worrying himself about the next—well, it is not strange. He certainly *has* everything that can make this life agreeable—a palace to live in, a bright, cheerful family, every comfort, every luxury—high health, too, an unrivalled digestive and locomotive apparatus, and a gay, devil-may-care temper. He is, moreover, a large holder of Government and State Securities, which command high premiums—he has his Bonds and Mortgages too, as solid and substantial as the round globe itself—nothing can shake them, save a second deluge, or



the great final fire—no wonder that he has a good opinion of a world which treats him in this handsome, liberal manner. He would be quite resigned to stay here a century or two longer, on the same terms—oh that I could only give him this rickety constitution of mine for the next twelve months, and get his glorious one in exchange—a precious bargain for *him*, to be sure—would he still chatter away so agreeably, still wear that pleasant expression, think you? And yet such an experiment might be the very best thing in the world, for both of us—might teach us many lessons well worth learning. Yes, we are both wrong—my views of life are quite too bitter and gloomy, his altogether too reckless and superficial. If I need the cheering, genial influence of health, he is quite as much in need of the wholesome discipline of sickness—his conscience is getting quite too drowsy—his inner man wants stirring up—he *ought* to be scared out of this gay Epicurian mode of living—he has no right to take the world so easy, when there is so much wretchedness and ignorance around him—he has no business to squander away his time and money as he does, on fleeting pleasures—what a world of good he might be doing, this very minute—there are, no doubt, *now*, poor wretches absolutely starving for want of work,

within a stone's throw of that costly house of his—if he knew it, he would relieve them, I am sure, amiable, kind-hearted man as he is—but why does he *not* know it? why is he not hunting up these poor, suffering brethren of his, instead of lounging along the streets in this pleasant, nonchalant way? what has he been about all the morning? Playing billiards, perhaps—or sauntering through some picture gallery—or lolling at home upon a luxurious sofa, reading some piquant novel—he will go home soon to a sumptuous dinner—in the evening, he will be found at some agreeable rendezvous or other, where there will be pretty faces, and lovely flowers, and soft music—all that can gratify and soothe the senses—that's the way he spends his life—it is made up of a constant succession of such scenes. Even his very Faith seems to be a mere minister to his love of ease and splendor—what a dainty pew he worships in—what brilliant stained windows surround him—what an exquisitely fretted roof above him—what a faultless choir sings praises for him—what a charming sermon he has to listen to—as stately and beautiful as the temple itself—as cold and polished, too, as its exquisite marble pillars—what a choice and charmingly dressed company of fellow-worshippers is here—a terrible hardship, to be sure, to have to

spend a couple of hours a week in a scene so luxurious and elegant. What would those dear old pious paupers, the Apostles, have said to it? what sort of a reception would they meet with, were they suddenly to make their appearance in these spacious aisles? they might stand all day, I reckon, with those plain, sunburnt faces, and those coarse, travel-stained garments of theirs, before a solitary pew door would be opened unto them. Oh, what a perversion, what a mockery of Religion—is there any heart, soul, meaning in these solemn rites, to the great mass of the gay people here assembled? no, no—they might quite as well be sitting in state in their opera-boxes, or airing themselves in their sumptuous carriages—and are these lives of vanity and empty show and self-indulgence to pass unquestioned, unrebuked? is there to be no chastisement for this abominable misuse of the gifts of the Great Giver? What, am I to turn life into a mere entertainment, run away from all its duties, devote myself exclusively to the gratification of my appetites and fancies, and shall I not be called to a most strict and bitter account for it hereafter? Isn't it high time, then, for —— to be alarmed about himself? Wouldn't a good fit of sickness be the most blessed thing, perhaps, that

could happen to him? Might not a year of bodily languor and suffering be the means of bringing about the eternal well-being of his soul? "But how is it," he asks me in reply, "how is it, if this sick bed teaches such impressive lessons as you describe, that *you* have not profited more by them? Precious little good does it seem to have done *you*, in the way of mending your temper and character—for aught I see, you are quite as worldly, selfish, and sensual, as the gayest, heartiest buck in town." Too true—too true—yes, we are both of us sadly astray—both miserable invalids, so far as spiritual health is concerned—pitiful paupers in all that constitutes true riches—worthless, worthless indeed, such lives as ours—what is there noble, or even respectable, about them? So far as all heroic enterprises are concerned, all conquests in science or art, all labors of love to others, we might as well never have been born—shame on us both! how dare ——— remain, another moment, the gay, reckless, chattering pleasure seeker that he is? And I, how dare I persist in this fretful, peevish egotism of mine? In a world like this, too, where there are so many glorious things to be done—so many victories over evil to be won, in our own hearts, and those of our brethren—so many mourners to be comforted, poor re-

lieved, vicious re-claimed, ignorant instructed—so many truths to be explored, so many precious secrets to be won and wrung from Nature. How outrageous, then, in me, to sit here, whining over my paltry aches and annoyances—how unpardonable in ——— to spend his time, as he does, upon his appetites—why, to hear him talk, you would think that he cared a hundred-fold more about the curing of his meats, and the treatment of his wines, than about the very Constitution he lives under, or the Religion of his Fathers. Oh, let us awake, forthwith, from this infernal apathy, this abominable sensuality—let's try to be of some use in the world—why not commit ourselves, at once, to some noble enterprise or other?—there are enough of them, Heaven knows, all around us, that are crying aloud for friends and helpers. To the rescue, then, like good men and true—let's go at it, at once, tooth and nail, heart and soul—then we shall be leading lives worth having, and worth perpetuating—then we shall wear lasting smiles upon our faces, and secure abiding comforts in our hearts. Ah, me, shall I never taste the luxury of doing good? Shall I never know the blessing of a quiet conscience? How long am I to continue this unprofitable, self-tormenting course? How long am I thus wilfully

to defraud myself of all peace of mind here, and of all hope of a happy, glorious career in the world to come? In the name of all that is dear and sacred, then, awake, awake, awake!

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called to see me to-day—rather a tumultuous visit, as usual—confound him, he seems to get more and more passionate and irritable every day—I have a sufficiently bad temper of my own, but I am a perfect lamb alongside of him. The first part of the call was pleasant enough, too—we seemed to be chatting along very cozily and agreeably, when I, somehow or other, inadvertently let slip a remark on the subject of Puseyism, by no means in accordance with his High Church notions. He took fire forthwith—his face was in a blaze—his arms flew about as if there had been a dozen windmills present—he bespattered me with all sorts of abominable epithets and personalities, in a style as outrageous as it was uncalled for. Like a fool, instead of submitting silently and patiently to this shower of abuse, I got mad in return, and replied in the same strain, and so, before we knew it, there we were, like a couple of belligerent tom-cats, spitting


and sputtering and growling, our backs up, eyes glaring, and very whiskers trembling with wrath—luckily a huge table was between us, else we should have undoubtedly resorted to the ultima ratio of fisticuffs—as it was, we kept up for a good half hour a pyrotechnic display that would have done credit to Vesuvius himself—till, finally, the absurdity of the scene seemed to strike us, all at once, and a hearty fit of laughter restored us to our senses—he apologized, I explained, we shook hands—then we had another hearty laugh, and parted, at last, as good friends as ever. Ah dear, what a pity that a man so well meaning and kind hearted as he is at bottom, should yet be so utterly without self-government—one would suppose that the infinity of scrapes and annoyances that this peppery temper of his is for ever getting him into, would teach him wisdom—what a dance it has led him, to be sure—how many black eyes it has cost him—how many streams of claret has it set flowing from that fine Roman nose of his—how many nights at watch-houses, commitments for contempt, actions for assault and battery, challenges, expulsions from theatres and concert rooms, in fact, all sorts of disagreeable experiences, have been occasioned by this sad infirmity. Why, it was only the other night, that he was turned out

of the theatre, for picking a quarrel with his neighbor—some fancied insult or other set him in a frenzy, as usual—from words they got to blows—a disgraceful row ensued, to the great annoyance of both audience and actors—it ended, of course, in the forcible ejection of both parties—to add to ———'s mortification, it was the very night of Macready's farewell benefit, and the play, *Lear*—and ———, moreover, is a most enthusiastic admirer of the great Artist, and had paid a very heavy premium for his seat—and so, just for foolishly giving way to his feelings, he not only lost his place, had his clothes torn, and his face embellished, but likewise missed the finest dramatic treat of the season, probably of the century—and yet, all this bitter experience seems to be completely thrown away upon him—no doubt he will have just such another fury-fit to morrow, as he favored me with this morning—no matter how trivial the cause may be—off he goes, like a rocket, at the very slightest provocation—he will actually get mad because an omnibus refuses to stop for him, or at being caught in a shower, or if he's too late for a ferry-boat—his negotiations with hack-drivers invariably result in a breach of the peace—he generally comes off second best, too, on such occasions, being by no means ro-



bust, and having quite misty notions of the science of self-defence. Poor fellow! how many sad yet funny exhibitions he has made of himself—how he will curse a pair of tight boots—how furious a cup of cold coffee makes him. Are the dice missing, when he wants to play backgammon? He forthwith becomes a “tiger in his fierce deportment.” Is he hacking away at a tough goose? Oh, how wrathful he gets—it is as much as he can do to keep from throwing it, dish and all, right out of the window—he has actually precipitated a dictionary into the street, for not containing the word that he was looking for. Does the Minister utter a sentiment from the desk, which is unpalatable to him—up he gets, snatches his hat, kicks open the pew door, and bounces out of Church, in a huff—nay, he has even come within an inch of having a most disgraceful scuffle with a brother pall-bearer, over the grave of a friend. What a pity that he should be afflicted thus—that he should carry this devil about with him wherever he goes, to torment himself and everybody else. Will he ever change? Will he ever become a peaceful, placable, reasonable being? I fear not—the thing is too deeply rooted in him to be eradicated—it will go with him to his grave—Reason may preach, Religion may plead, and may

perhaps gain an occasional victory over it—but as to permanently cooling down that hot, boiling blood of his, is it reasonable to expect it? Yes, 'tis that confounded ardent temperament, those frightfully excitable nerves, that are to blame, not he—the man bears no malice in his heart—he would not wilfully maim a mosquito. Death, death alone can put out these fires that rage so within him; Heaven grant that it be not a violent one—it would be far from strange, though, if his brains *were* knocked out by a club some of these days, or his breath driven out of him by a bullet. Ah well, I hope he will have a pleasanter time of it in the next world—that that restless spirit of his will be lodged in far more quiet and agreeable quarters—that the elements will be mixed up in him far differently—the idea of his keeping up such a turbulent, volcanic career through all eternity, is too frightful to dwell upon. May the Lord, in his mercy, so order it, and may ———, amid the genial scenes and glorious employments of his new existence, speedily forget his tumultuous life on earth, or at most, only recall it as some wild and troubled dream.



HIS Most Gracious Majesty, the Sun, does us the honor of crossing the line to-day, and the elements are, of course, turning out for the usual semi-annual frolic—wind, rain, hail, snow, they are all out in full feather, for a three days' celebration; old Neptune is on hand, too, in grand costume, in honor of the occasion, and is doubtless, at this moment, giving his friends a magnificent entertainment all along the coast, from Saco even to Tobasco—high times to-day amongst those roaring, rollicking waves of his—whew, how the wind howls—what a flapping of awnings, and fluttering of umbrellas, and creaking of signs, and rattling of windows, and slamming of doors, is going on all over town! it is enough to drive a poor nervous man frantic. It is absurd to expect any quiet thoughts or pleasant fancies with all this plaguey racket and riot going on out-doors. What a day for poor Jack—but for his grog and pig-tail, he would never get through with it—he takes more comfort in *them*, such weather as this, I reckon, than he does in the good book itself. Well, he must be a flinty-hearted fellow, who begrudges them to him now. Ah, those friends of ours, who put to sea two days ago in such high glee, how they must be catching it; what a searching and overhauling their stomachs are having this

blessed minute; they are not now discussing the classic plains of Italy, the fascinations of Paris, the sublimity of the Alps—oh, no, there is no part of Jersey so flat and mean, that they would not gladly set foot on it, if they could—no village in Arkansas so rude and unsightly, but they would cheerfully spend the balance of their days in it, so they might only get out of that infernal, tossing, plunging, kicking steamer—patience, friends, patience—if you *will* see all these fine things on the other side, the mouldy side of this great cheese of ours, you must pay the regular toll; Neptune will not be defrauded of his time-honored tribute, so make your peace with him, and with your stomachs, as speedily as possible; think of Noah's voyage—think of those forty dreary days and dirty nights that he was drifting about, in that clumsy old ark of his; here you are, in a magnificent ship, surrounded by every comfort and luxury, and in ten short days you are almost within hearing of the venerable bells of Westminster. What would St. Paul have said to these arrangements, or Columbus, or our Pilgrim Fathers? These mirrored saloons, that superb pantry are very much like the accommodations on board the Mayflower, are they not? Stop grunting, then, for shame, and making those horrible

faces. Ah dear, this is no weather for *me* to venture abroad in—what is there in the paper, I wonder—hem—Rail Road to the Pacific—a colossal undertaking, truly—the editor waxes warm and eloquent on the subject—it must and shall be built, he says : if *he* don't live to take a ride on it, his boys and girls *will*; the country *must* have it—the commerce of the Union cries aloud for it—the Union itself will be stronger, an hundred-fold stronger, when this magnificent work is done; the great father of roads, he calls it, worthy of the great father of waters, from which it sallies forth to greet the broad Pacific—and so on, in this strain, for a couple of columns. Somewhat grandiloquent, to be sure, still there is a hearty, earnest enthusiam about it, which is quite charming; who can help using large words, when talking about such amazingly large things? Who can help being taken off his feet at times, when he thinks of the wonderful things in store for this dear land of ours?—when he thinks of the magnificent picture which the valley of the Mississippi will present, a century or two hence. Fancy yourself taking an aerial journey over it in the summer of 2050; such an excursion may be quite practicable, long ere that time, in a comfortable aircraft of one's own, too, with a few choice com-

panions, going fast or slow, sinking or soaring, ad libitum, and alighting at one's pleasure, be it on sunny hill-side, or in heart of stately city—dropping to earth as easily and gracefully as ever bird lit on bough. Oh, what a panorama—how our senses are filled, and our hearts stirred within us, as scene after scene of beauty and grandeur rises around in never tiring succession. What fields of golden grain! were there ever such before on the face of the earth? What vineyards, and orchards, and gardens! Such noble forests, too, and groups of smiling hills; such majestic rivers, crowded with life, their banks lined with gay villas, and shining villages, and thriving towns. As we rise and rise above it, how the fair scene expands: still the same beautiful objects greet us; the same charming combination of all that is bountiful in nature and kindly in culture; there is no decay, no desolation, no, not one dark spot to be seen; all is peace, and plenty, and prosperity. Still we keep rising, and now we can no longer hear the hum of the busy hive beneath us, or the pleasant sound of the church-bells; but what a grand and glorious map is spread out around us; we are looking down on happy homes, and well-tilled fields, and cheerful workers, and frolicking children, and comfortable flocks and herds; no grim castles, no dismal convents, no huge

unsightly barracks deface the picture; but there are churches, and school-houses, and colleges innumerable, scattered all over this glorious valley; tall factories, and stately warehouses full of corn, wine, and oil; depots, that look like towns, filled, too, with the products of all climes; there are thousands and tens of thousands of swift steamers, for ever running on the errands of this great multitude; trains of cars, whizzing along continually; telegraphs without number, speeding over the wires, incessantly, their magic messages from north to south, from ocean to ocean. Still we soar and soar, and now the great Mississippi seems a mere thread of silver, and those tall trees upon its borders the tiniest of shrubs, and that vast city that crowns its banks, why, it looks as if you might stow it away in a toy-box. That little fairy spot on the opposite shore is the far-famed cemetery—Auburn is venerable, Greenwood is charming, but this far exceeds them both in beauty—where else, on earth, will you find such trees, and fountains, and winding walks, and exquisitely carved monuments? But let us descend, and visit this mighty metropolis at our feet—ah, how it grows and grows upon us and rivets the gaze as we approach—hark, faint murmuring sounds begin to rise from it—down, down we go, and

at last the spacious squares, and gay streets, and crowded quays, are clearly revealed to us—what a profusion of towers, and spires, and swelling domes is here—what a princely group of buildings is that directly under us—let us alight in their midst, yes, at the base of yon colossal statue. Ah, is that the world-renowned statue of Washington? the same; what a magnificent work of art; as far before all others of the kind, as the man it commemorates was above all other men; there are hundreds of others, in bronze and marble, in this vast and happy valley, but this, this is the great work, the pride of the nation, the crowning ornament of the Federal metropolis. That grand pile opposite is the Capitol; there is but one other dome on the round globe that can compare with that which crowns its stately rotunda; what splendors within, too; what wealth of precious marbles, and statues, and bas-reliefs, and frescoes! Here the senators and representatives of sixty states meet and deliberate in harmony; here the legislation of more than a hundred millions of people is conducted with a despatch and decorum and wisdom, before unknown in the history of nations. That beautiful building on the right, with the life-like statue of Franklin before it, is the National library, and alongside of it, in that little gem



of a temple, the Supreme Court hold their sessions. Noble, venerable body ! is there anything more dear and sacred to the heart of every American, than this serene, spotless, majestic tribunal ? Those superb structures on our left, and behind us, are dedicated to the different departments—there was nothing in the Roman Forum half so fine or spacious—and, pray, what is that colossal edifice in the distance, with its forest of columns and noble cupola ? that is the Federal Post Office—what a pile, and yet they talk of enlarging it ; it is not equal, they say, to the wants of the nation ; and you would believe them, too, were you to see the huge mountain of letters, and papers, and pamphlets, and documents, that daily passes through it ; the mail-bags would load a seventy-four, that will be sent away from that building before sunset ; nor is it strange ; think of the tremendous accumulation of news necessarily manufactured and consumed each day, by a nation of a hundred millions of freemen, a nation in which every mother's son and daughter of us, over six, can read and write, which transacts more business in four and twenty hours, than the whole globe did, in as many years, in the times of the Cæsars. Hard by, in yonder circular edifice, is its great co-worker in the cause of commerce and civilization—what,

that immense building with the glittering dome, and the wings radiating from it in every direction? the same—there you will find the great errand-bearer of the nations, the revolutionizer of the earth. It is just entering upon the third century of its career, and what wonders has it worked? why the famous labors of Hercules were mere child's play compared with its miraculous exploits. National Telegraph Office—brief, but magical words—household words to us, but what would the men of Plymouth have said to them? what would the Pater Patriæ himself have said? With all his prophetic wisdom, with all his visions of the future power and glory of his country, did it ever enter into his heart to conceive of a consummation such as this? But let us enter its spacious rotunda—what a busy scene is here, what a throng, what a hum—so is it always, night and day, day and night—not a moment passes when the sound of footsteps may not be heard upon these pavements—the winged words are for ever flying to and fro—messages of all kinds coming and going continually, from all the corners of the continent—from Bangor to Oregon, from Baffin's Bay to Patagonia. Do you wish to secure a passage for a friend in the next Hong Kong steamer? pass under that arched entrance to the left, state your wants, and

the lightning steed shall be harnessed up forthwith, and the whole thing will have been arranged by your San Francisco correspondent, before you get back to your counting house—or do you wish to know the state of the lumber market at Machias? or what hides are worth to-day at Montevideo? or how United States sixes of 2100 left off at the second board at Valparaiso? or whether the Minnesota and Winnipeg Railroad company have declared their usual dividend to-day? or do you wish to crack a joke, or send a conundrum over the wires, to a friend at Acapulco? the operators are all ready for you, gentlemen—you have but to pay a trifle, and all your questions shall be answered, your whims gratified—'twill not be so easy to-morrow, however, for our President has a special Message to send to Congress—a long and interesting one, too—its subject, the proposed Union of the two Republics. Yes, after years of discussion and agitation, the proposition has, at last, been formally made to us by our South American brethren—and to-morrow are the documents to be laid before the nation—long before to-morrow's sun has set, will those documents have been read and canvassed in all the cities of the Union. Ah dear—they certainly managed these things very differ-

ently in the days of the Amphictyonic Council, or of the Helvetic Confederation, or of the old Continental Congress, God bless them. But let us escape from this bustling, exciting spot. Ah, what handsome marble house is that, with the lawn before it, and the fountain? how beautiful it is, and how modest and unpretending, withal. 'Tis the White House. What, the Chief Magistrate of the mightiest nation on earth provided with no ampler accommodations than these? Even so—and thank Heaven that it is so. What better evidence would you have of the purity and stability of our Government, than this simple fact, that its Executive, the man who holds an office, by all odds, the most honorable, powerful, and influential upon the face of the Earth, lives in a house not one whit bigger or costlier than old Rough and Ready himself occupied, more than two centuries ago? Our population has increased ten-fold since then—our wealth, an hundred-fold. What mighty works have we done, meanwhile—what vast and magnificent temples have we reared to Faith, to Justice, to Commerce—what costly palaces have we dedicated to Education, to Charity, to Art—what splendid Halls of Legislation, in every one of the blessed sixty States—could you see them all grouped together in

some stately park, and lit up by the setting sun, it would be a spectacle indeed—and the great Alma Mater of them all, you majestic capitol, is it not the noblest fabric ever raised by wit of man? and yet, with all this pomp and splendor around it, the same modesty, simplicity, economy preside over the Executive Mansion, as in the days of Washington and Jay. Oh, may it be so ever—and for centuries to come, may its occupants be as wise and worthy as he who now presides over it with such quiet dignity and courtesy! But what fine equestrian figure is that, in the square opposite? Why, who should it be, but glorious old Zack himself, the ever memorable hero of Buena Vista—a spirited group, is it not? The good people here are very proud of it—there is but one name more dear to us all than his—those admirable bas-reliefs on the pedestals tell the story of his desperate fights—but we may not linger over them. Ah, here is the far-famed Federal Square, so celebrated for its fountains and arcades and brilliant shops—that superb building on the corner is the National Theatre, one of the largest and handsomest in the world—what say the bills? “As you Like It,” and the “Agreeable Surprise,” are the pieces for to-night—what a powerful cast—that fascinating Miss Johnson plays Rosalind, too—’twill

be a great treat, most assuredly—*there's* fame for you. What would Shakspeare have said, had this been revealed to him? When this divine play was written, Jamestown and Plymouth were a wilderness—the Bermudas, the fabled haunt of Devils—the great River of the Nations, unknown to civilized man. Would not, think you, the poet's eyes sparkle, and his cheeks glow with pleasure, could he be here to-night, in this beautiful temple, filled, as it will be, with his worshipers—could he hear once more the sweet notes of his bewitching Rosalind, in all their native grace and tenderness? But 'twould take us a twelvemonth to explore all the wonders and pleasant things of this great Metropolis—ours is literally a flying visit, and we must resume our aeronautic journey forthwith. Up then and away—away, over the beautiful rolling prairies, no more, thank God, the haunts of wild beasts and savages, but the homes of happy Christian men—ah, what an interminable succession of corn-fields, and gardens, and hamlets, and towns! On, on we go, and the limpid Michigan is in sight, and the great and prosperous city of Chicago—there's a charming panorama for you—what grand, massive quays—what crowds of merchandise—what a congregation of steamers, brigs, barges, sloops, yachts, sail-boats,

coming and going, loading and unloading, gliding and dancing about in all directions! Yon busy spot is the basin of the famous Grand Canal that binds together all these glorious lakes and rivers—what princely docks and warehouses! Would not the Venetians, in the palmiest days of their republic, have stared in amazement at such a picture of commerce as this?—and not a mere picture of commerce either, thank Heaven. No, we are not looking down upon a mere nest of traffickers and money-seekers—bear witness, that magnificent Cathedral, that stately University, that noble Gallery of Art, worthy of fair Florence herself. But we must leave them, and make our way across the fertile fields of Michigan, the happy home of the farmer—what a sea of golden grain is beneath us—what goodly rows of fruit trees, and scattered groups of oaks and elms—what multitudes of cattle, and sheep, and horses—the reapers are abroad, gathering in the precious spoils—all pleasant sounds and sights of rural life are here, to greet us—peaceful, beautiful landscapes. Again the scene changes, and we are flying over the sparkling waters of Erie. Such a fleet of vessels—as we advance, city after city rises up, and disappears, as if by magic—its harbor full of life; its streets thronged with people. Ah, what

huge, complicated mass of building is that on the right? Oh yes, 'tis the famous terminus of the great Erie Rail-road--indeed, five great Rail-roads come together here--there is no busier spot than that, in the great Empire State--thousands of passengers and hundreds of thousands of tons of merchandise pass through it every day--the men of Tyre, and Carthage, and Venice, nay, of London, had no conception of such a day's work--and to think, that it is but little more than two centuries ago that this region was a howling wilderness. But we will not pause to muse and wonder, for the Niagara is at hand, and we shall soon hear the voice of the mighty cataract. Hark to its deep, solemn music. Ah, 'tis the same glorious scene as ever--there are slight changes in the picture, to be sure--there is a handsome town here, and grand hotels, and a crowd of pilgrims, from all the quarters of the globe--but all else, as when it came fresh from the hand of God--the same frowning rocks, and wooded islands, and dancing rapids, and emerald sheet half hid in foam, and boiling whirlpools, and beautiful rainbows. But here let us take leave of our aerial conveyance, and return to our own century--this is no place for idle words and flights of fancy--let us wander about, in modest silence, as becomes true worshipers, in this



great Temple of nature—we want no vain prattlers here. Disturb not these solemn services, but listen, with due reverence, to the melodious teachings of the great cataract. Hark to the majestic anthem which is here ceaselessly rising to God's glory, in his own magnificent Cathedral—through the dim ages past hath it sounded, through the long ages to come will it keep sounding forth his glorious praises—no place, this, for the frivolous, or sordid, or sensual man; but to the poet, the student, the moralist, 'tis holy, haunted ground. Oh, may it remain so through all coming time! May the rash, innovating hand of man never be raised against it! Here, at least, may the fierce, restless spirit of Progress be checked and abashed. Hither may thoughtful pilgrims come, in all generations, to gaze, and listen, and wonder, and worship, and give thanks to the great Creator and Father of All.

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THE same tumultuous weather, to day; I have been a prisoner, of course—tedious, tedious, tedious,—but it would have been tenfold more tedious, had not that sprightly, sparkling little coz of mine come to the rescue—yes, in the most amiable, winning

way in the world, did she abandon her books and her music, to play battledore and backgammon with me—sweet thing—may Heaven send her a kind and worthy husband—how *can* I scold and scowl at her, as I do? Why, I actually threw double sixes three times running, and she never even frowned—had it been *her* luck, I should no doubt have behaved abominably—oh Lord!—I wonder what would become of us, between this and next New Years, were the women all suddenly withdrawn from earth, and consigned to Heaven, in a lump—nay, would not the planet, before the end of a week, become the vilest of pigpens? Would not its occupants be turned into abominable slovens, blackguards, ruffians, thieves, murderers? Who can doubt it? Even were we permitted to live out our days, who would take life on such terms? What, a world where there are no mothers, wives, sisters? No, no, the sooner such a planet went to the dogs, the better—it wouldn't be worth saving—dreariest, forlornest part of the universe, it could not be knocked out of it too soon—the very angels would turn their heads away, as they flew by it. Ah dear me! I think I am entitled to a kiss, after that last speech.

My neighbor ——— has just dropped in to see

me; the same grumbling, croaking old soul as ever; with everything under Heaven to make him happy, he will nevertheless persist in being miserable—he seems to take a perverse pleasure in looking on the dark side of everybody, and everything; he is eternally predicting all kinds of rascalities and calamities—we are, even now, he says, on the eve of a tremendous explosion, in the political and financial world—nothing can prevent it—come it must, and ruin with it—no, not a solitary ray of hope can he see gilding the future—all is black, black, black. Hang the old raven!—why the deuce didn't he stay at home? What right have such fellows as he to inflict themselves upon their neighbors? Haven't I blue devils enough of my own to annoy me, but he must set his vile crew of imps on me? Besides, there's some shadow of an excuse for my grunting, with my wretched nerves, and rickety constitution—but he, the old rhinoceros, he ought to be ashamed of himself—why, if he were to sleep out all night, in this gale, it wouldn't hurt him—he'd be as well as ever in the morning, and as impatient for his breakfast—such a breakfast, too—the very bears would blush to see him at it—he grumble, forsooth—a man, who never had a sick hour in his whole life—a man, who carries

about town such a magnificent stomach as he does—why, if it were put up at auction this day, what a scramble there would be for it among the epicures—were ostriches the bidders, there would still be a rush for it—for shame, man—take a lesson from it; faithful, hard working, unmurmuring drudge that it is, what a rebuke does it read its peevish, fretful owner—but why remonstrate? 'Tis of no use—he'll never alter—he's been quite too long in the croaking business, to give it up now—for more than half a century has he been pouring forth his doleful prophecies—to be sure, each day's experience gives them the lie—but what of that? What is experience worth, or reason, or remonstrance, when a man has once got a perverse habit fairly fastened upon him? What folly then to expect any revolution in the inner man of this confirmed old grunter—croak, croak, croak he will, to the very last verse of the chapter—he even went so far as to say, just now, that he did not believe there would be a single mill in motion, or bank in operation, this time next year—that the Union will be dissolved long before then, and that we shall have a frightful civil war upon our hands in consequence—oh, of course, of course—he might as well have added, that this equinoctial storm will not leave a

single tree standing, this side of the Alleghanies, and that it will be the death of every vessel on our seaboard—one remark is just about as sensible as the other. Pshaw! one gets quite out of patience with such people; what monstrous perversion, what base ingratitude to the Giver of all these countless blessings that we enjoy; why, here is a man, who has been living on the very fat of the land, ever since he was weaned, and yet, as regularly as the seasons come round, you find him scolding about short crops and predicting starvation; a man, who has had every comfort and luxury that money could buy, ever since he began to creep, and yet eternally grunting about poverty and bankruptcy—and so it will be, till death stops that muttering mouth of his; oh, how abominable—when he ought to have been giving thanks, and singing hymns of gratitude, and sharing his good things with his brethren, and going about to relieve the distresses of his poor neighbors; what excuse can there be, what escape from punishment can there be, for such an outrageous abuse of the gift of life, as this? But who am I, to sit in the seat of judgment? Am I a whit better, myself? No, no—alas, I have quite too much of the same rascally disposition—the same propensity to look

upon the black side of life, to see nothing but clouds and storms in the future, to quarrel with the laws of Nature, to call in question the arrangements of Providence. And oh, how little a thing it takes to annoy me—how trifling a matter will upset this querulous temper of mine ; did I not get angry this very morning, at the sight of a few straggling gray hairs in my whiskers? Did I not rail and pluck at them, in a savage, vindictive spirit? Did I not curse a faithful old coat too, and the man that made it, for simply parting company with a button? Oh, is there any mishap in life so trifling and insignificant, that a man of a snarling, captious temper cannot turn it into an engine of torture, and himself into a perfect vessel of wrath, because of it? What folly ; why not take things coolly? Why quarrel with the flight of time, the decrees of destiny? And yet I do ; I am angry, this very moment, with the whole rising generation ; I am not willing to be supplanted, to be driven off the stage of life—though my entertainment has been a meager one, compared with that of many of my brethren, still I am unwilling to leave it, and I frown and grumble because the great Giver of the feast so wills it. I am not satisfied to bow myself out quietly, and with a good

grace, but seem determined to wait till I am collared, and forced out—what a contumacious, villanous spirit! I am mad, too, at my own ignorance and imbecility—my terribly limited powers of enjoyment and endurance; I am mad at seeing, every day, ten thousand things that I cannot comprehend—how many studies I have to abandon, pleasures to forego—yes, I am vexed, and almost furious, when I think of the niggardly allowance I have to put up with, in the way of years, and nerves, and wits, and knowledge. Why is it so? Why has not our Maker endowed us more generously? Why has he not condescended to let us into more of the secrets of his government, the processes of his works? I am tired of being the insignificant ignoramus and nobody that I am—why, if I were to die to-morrow, I should not be half so much missed from this big town, as a seed from a fig; can it be, that the earth itself is of no more account in the great Universe? So the confounded astronomers tell us! Hang their discoveries, say I—what a bitter pill to our pride—what a rebuke to our paltry squabbles for place and power. Oh, if I would only take the rebuke in the right spirit—if I would only learn from it a lesson of true humility and obedience; but no, I only get all the

more mad and outrageous, when I think of these things ; I can't bear the idea of cutting such a sorry figure in the great theatre of creation—I am angry at being the diminutive, ephemeral earth-worm that I am ; why was I condemned to live in this paltry, fourth-rate, provincial planet ? Why wasn't my lot cast in Jupiter ? Life would have been worth having, then ; threescore years and ten would have amounted to something, there—and as it is, how is the value of my poor earthly pittance impaired by this shabby constitution of mine. Why am I thus parsimoniously dealt with ? Why can't *I*, like ——, study my sixteen hours a day, year after year, with impunity ? Why can't *I* toss off my two bottles per diem, as —— has done, without a solitary headache, for the last score of years ? Why can't *I* throw about the fifty-sixes as —— does, and climb ropes, and run races, instead of being the puny, feeble wretch I am ? Why, to hold a mere umbrella over my head, for five minutes, nearly tires me to death ; a single glass of wine will raise the very old Harry within me ; and if I read more than a half hour at a time, I must pay for it with throbbing brain, and icy feet. Is this fair ? Haven't I some right to grumble ? And yet, if I had all these things, I should not be satisfied or



grateful; if I had, to-day, all the learning of Aristotle, the strength of Hercules, the eyes of Argus, the speed of Atalanta, I should still find something to fret and mutter about—'tis my cursed, rebellious, abominable nature.

But enough of this egotism—ah, how the wind keeps howling—go ahead, old Boreas, have the frolic out—topple down the chimneys, blow down the trees, sweep off the bridges, knock in the ribs of the poor old ships, drown the sailors, bury the merchandise in the yesty waves, keep it up, celebrate your *Trois Jours* in grand style, while you are about it—what care *I*? Am I not snugly housed, and seated by my comfortable fireside? I've no brothers on the deep—no wines, or silks, or spices, tossing about upon the billows. I can enjoy this wild music and dancing of the elements; at least, can be cool and philosophical on the subject; but they, the poor bereaved and plundered ones, what say *they* to this vile mischief-making tempest? Do they see the finger of God in it, or the wild, wicked pranks of Satan? Patience, friends, patience; keep your tempers, rebel not, blaspheme not; these are not the howlings of malignant fiends, no, nor the manifestations of God's anger; the injuries they inflict, grievous though they be, and hard to bear,

yet what are they, compared with the benefits they yield us? Could we get along at all without them? Would the air be fit to breathe, the world to live in? What a dry, drooping, dreary planet it would be, to be sure. Instead of grumbling, then, ought we not to welcome this glorious gale? Is it not out upon a right royal and beneficent errand? a messenger of love, not wrath? a purifier, invigorator, breathing new life into all the veins and alleys of the earth? preserving the wondrous frame of things about us, in all its strength and freshness? Ought we not to greet all the phenomena of nature, all the dispensations of Providence, in the same spirit? The few casual mischiefs that they cause, are they to be named for a second, with the innumerable, ceaseless blessings that they bring? Any other view of the matter is heathenish and savage. Oh, 'tis these cursed propensities, these vile passions of ours, that are for ever blinding our eyes to the truth. Ambition, pride, avarice, sensuality, these are the false lights that are for ever leading us astray; how can we expect to see our way clearly, to read aright life's lessons, while we keep such company? Out upon them! why can't I turn my back upon them at once, and for ever, and seek straightway the blessed society of the

Virtues? Faith, Hope, Charity—*they* are the true friends—the only companions, guides, interpreters, for life's puzzling, perilous journey. Alas! I know them not. I have read about them, to be sure, in the good book—have heard about them in sermons—have seen them in pictures—gazed admiringly upon their sculptured charms, as they grace the monuments of popes and saints; but the things themselves, the blessed originals, I feel that they are strangers to this wayward, perverse heart of mine. How can I expect to be happy, then? to have peace within, or sunshine without? Happy indeed!—oh, no, no—all is disorder, tumult, rebellion within me. What right have I to expect anything else, filled as I am with false views, harsh judgments, blind prejudices, tormenting doubts, sinful desires?—precious materials for happiness, these. Is it any wonder that I grumble? that I find fault with God's doings? that I am constantly growling at myself, and picking bones with my brethren? Why will I consent to remain in such a state? why do I not rise up at once, and thrust out these vile tenants, that are breeding perpetual warfare and wretchedness in my heart? Away with you, foul, rebel crew of appetites and passions—torment me no longer—away—away!

THE blessed sun is out again, at last. We have had a beautiful, tranquil Sabbath day—went to church this morning. Well, has it done me any good? am I any wiser or better for it? not a whit—no, I am not an inch nearer the kingdom of heaven than before—my own fault, no doubt; I didn't go in the right spirit; I didn't go as a poor, erring sinner *should* go, to ask pardon for my offences, and to return thanks for undeserved benefits—oh, no, I went for exercise, for change of scene, to hear the music, to have my fancy tickled, my wits brightened. I was disappointed, most thoroughly cheated; the atmosphere was oppressive, the music poor, the sermon heavy as lead—I had much better have staid at home, reading Jeremy Taylor—still, I was served right; I had no business to go, from such motives. And yet, was it altogether my fault?—I think not—I think the minister himself was quite as much to blame—at least, he seemed to me to be thinking of himself far more than of his Maker—to be more anxious about parading his elocution than about exhibiting the truth. *Could* a man, really in earnest about the salvation of his own soul, and of those of his flock, have read the hymns in that pompous, theatrical style? could he have put up such a petition to the throne of Grace, so

stuffed with polysyllables and expletives? What was the use of that long string of attributes, drawled out in that affected way? why go into all those historical details? what business had they in a prayer? why that painfully elaborated climax, towards the close? why that awful dropping of the voice at the word Amen? Why, too, spend a good half hour, piling up this vain mass of words, wearying us all out in body and mind, when a few brief, earnest, fervent sentences would have been infinitely more edifying to the hearers, more acceptable to God? And above all, how could a pastor, worthy of the name, presume to put such sorry feed as that upon his sheep, in the way of sermon? Meager, miserable trash; all noise, wind, gesture; baldest of commonplace; not a solitary new idea; not one fresh, fragrant flower of fancy, from beginning to end; a mere showy humbug throughout; and yet, strange to say, this man is popular; he has a handsome, well-filled church, and a substantial salary. But is it so strange, after all? perhaps not; for though thus deficient in learning, genius, and anything like true eloquence, yet has he not a fine person, graceful attitudes, a musical voice? is not his linen always spotless? hasn't he always a pleasant word for the women? doesn't he handle the babies admirably, at

all christenings? doesn't he form a noble figure-head for a wedding? Was St. Paul himself at all comparable to him in any of these particulars? and are not these gifts quite as acceptable, in this degenerate age, as fervor, piety, self-devotion, thoughts that breathe, and words that burn? I can't help thinking, that if the glorious Apostle were alive to day, and were willing to accept a call from this congregation, he wouldn't have the opportunity—three-quarters of them would be for retaining the present incumbent; the other would only make them uncomfortable; would be quite too personal; would be saying all manner of unpalatable, irritating things. *He* never would consent to having a profane drunkard for an organist; *he* couldn't sit still in his pulpit, while a notorious, shameless harlot was officiating in the choir as first soprano—oh, no, he would be breeding a perfect tumult in the church, within a week; as it is, things go on smoothly——— minds his own business, and lets the music committee mind theirs; he sticks to his text, never ventures on unwelcome reforms, never handles forbidden topics, and see what a quiet, snug, cozy flock he has of it. Oh, what vile mockery, what heartless, soulless rites are these—and in how many churches are these mummeries practised, Sabbath

after Sabbath, in the blessed name of Christianity. Are these things so, or am I a vile slanderer? How many real, devoted Christians were there present this very morning? a poor baker's dozen or so, at most; the rest of us were a mere set of worldlings—vacant, sleepy-looking old people, and restless, flip-pant young ones—how listless, how indifferent! Had the preacher been enlarging on the properties of contingent remainders, instead of hammering away, as he did, upon the necessity of justification by faith, we couldn't have looked one whit more uninterested or stupid. Had the scene suddenly been changed to the opera, and had Ellsler come bounding on the stage, we'd have all been wide awake in a twinkling, I warrant you—what a stretching forth of necks, what a levelling of opera-glasses; or had Burton come rolling in, with his funny face, and his broad jokes, we should have been, instantler, bright as buttons. Oh, what abominable perversion, what an insult to the great founder of our faith, to put his name to such hollow, worthless services as these! Do we not *need* another Paul, indeed, to stir up these stagnant waters, to alarm these slumbering consciences, to create a thorough revolution and reform in the church? Oh, dear! how delighted we all were to be let out, and to fall

back upon the old track—the belles to pick up their beaux, and the elders to talk cotton and politics. I met —— at the door; I asked him what he thought of the discourse; the reply was in his usual quaint, queer style; “Ah,” said he, “if they only keep on preaching in this way, the grass will soon be knee-deep in the streets of heaven.” This remark seeming to shock a sensitive old lady behind us, it only encouraged him to add, that all prudent capitalists would make their investments in the other place—he is fond of such irreverent, absurd speeches—anything for a joke. On the way home, stumbled on ——; he looked as cold, sour, bitter, as ever—he’d not been to church, not *he*—catch *him* wasting his time in that way—he don’t believe in any such nonsense—but what *does* he believe in? poor unhappy skeptic, he has no faith in himself or his neighbor, or his Maker, in the past or the future. History he considers little better than a string of lies—revelation an arrant forgery—prophecy a clumsy contrivance of the priests—so with the virtues, patriotism, philanthropy, piety, what are they to *him*, but hollow, unmeaning sounds? He seems, indeed, studiously to reverse the poet’s beautiful maxim—to be eternally spying the soul of evil in things good. I asked him if there was any news.



"No, nothing special, I believe. The papers seem to be full of the usual stuff—silly editorials, lying obituaries, rascally money articles, the usual amount of swindling, robbery, murder, fools getting married, and so on—the same miserable old story as ever." After he had gone on in this strain for some time, I asked him if he had read that volume of Channing, which I lent him the other day. His lip began to curl—"Yes, I have looked over it; pretty writing, very pretty writing; the man certainly knew how to weave sentences, but——"

"But what?" "But I have no faith whatever in such views, myself; I consider them altogether one-sided and superficial; no man who knew the world, and what sorry stuff it is made of, could have held them. He did *not* know the world, how should he? he only saw the bright side of things; surrounded by every comfort and luxury, idolized by his friends, watched and tended like a royal baby, hemmed in continually by all the proprieties and elegancies of life, kept in a glass-case, as it were, like a bit of porcelain, what did *he* know of the common crockery around him? what did he know of the villanies and brutalities of the world? Did he ever explore that den of wickedness and wretchedness—St. Giles's? Did he ever witness the horrible spectacle which the Five Points present? If

he had, we should have been spared much of this fine talk about the dignity of human nature, the ineffable value of every human soul—fudge.” “You think him wrong, then?” “I do, most certainly—I consider him a mere enthusiast and dreamer.” “You are no believer, then, in the perfectibility of the race?” “Not I—at any rate, not on this earth—I don’t believe the world is one whit wiser or better than it was before the Flood. Men may be tamed down a little—they may not cut each other’s throats quite so freely—may not plunder each other quite so openly—there may be more intelligence among them—a greater *show* of right and justice—but what does it all amount to? Is not the devil served just as faithfully as ever? the *nature* of those services is somewhat changed, that’s all—what the men of old times did in a bold, manly way, with their swords, we do in a quiet, sneaking one, with our pens—they took lives, we murder characters—they robbed, with violence, on the highway, we prefer the peaceable employments of picking pockets and forging signatures. Is Satan any loser by the operation, think you? not he—on the contrary, he is a decided gainer, by the very ease and secrecy with which our rascalities are committed.” “Oh, these are

cheerful, encouraging views of yours, certainly—delightful ones, too, to impart to children—but do you really think so? Do you really think that this poor planet of ours has made no progress whatever, in the long flight of ages? Have we not gained *somewhat*, in the way of manners and morals, upon the men of Sodom and Gomorrah? Is our worship *quite* as blind and cruel as that paid to Baal, and to Moloch? Has civilization, then, done nothing for the race? Christianity nothing?” “Precious little that I can see—they may have modified the outside of things somewhat—but is not the same cursed canker gnawing at the heart of man, as ever? There *is* less unblushing, disgusting brutality on the earth, I grant you, but are not our imaginations and desires just as foul and abominable as ever? We do *not* pass our children through the fire to Moloch, but are we not ever ready to sacrifice ourselves, children, health, character, everything, to accursed Mammon? As for civilization, has it not multiplied the vices of men far more than it has strengthened their virtues? Christianity, say you? why, the *nominal* Christians on the globe are less than a quarter of the race; and as for the real, genuine disciples of Jesus, the smallest island in the Pacific would accommodate them all. Oh

no—men have done far more to corrupt Christianity than Christianity has to purify men.” “I don’t agree with you—men certainly have abused and perverted it, most vilely—what gift of God have they not? but with all these abuses and perversions, still is it not, has it not been, is it not destined to be through the ages to come, the greatest blessing that has ever descended from Heaven? The evils that have sprung from it, what are they, alongside of the benefits it has conferred? How many lives has it redeemed from sin—how many hearts has it sustained in the midst of trial and temptation—how many death-beds has it cheered—what a stimulus it has been to human wits! How many glorious works, in all the departments of Science and Art, has it not given rise to! How many noble enterprises, of all kinds, has it originated and fostered, and is fostering, all over the globe! Really, it seems to me neither grateful nor decent, for a man living in this enlightened age, and in this happy land of ours, to speak thus slightly, if not slanderously, of Christianity, as you do. Had you been a poor citizen of Rome, in the days of the Cæsars, had you been a witness of the horrible atrocities constantly perpetrated there, there might have been some excuse for your

gloomy, skeptical notions—but in this age of peace and prosperity and light, they seem to me quite outrageous.” “Poh—poh—this is mere talk for effect. I say again, I don’t *see* this peace, and light, and progress that you speak of—at least, nothing that will bear inspection and analysis. I repeat it—I don’t believe there has been any radical change in the hearts and lives of men, from the beginning. I have no doubt that we are, at bottom, quite as great rogues and ruffians as they were when the keel of the ark was laid—to be sure, the school-master has been abroad, very extensively so, since then—there is more enlightened self-interest in the world—we are beginning to find out the folly of fighting eternally—or rather, we quarrel more with Nature, less with our fellows—we are not such blood-thirsty savages, perhaps, as we were—but still the spirit of fight and selfishness and rebellion rages within us—the objects of our passions may have changed somewhat, but the passions themselves, are they not alive in our hearts, in all their fury and venom? What folly, then, to represent it otherwise—to assume that we are so much better than our forefathers—to put on this jubilant, saucy, self-righteous tone, so fashionable in this pretentious nineteenth century of ours, and in this coun-

try of loud talkers—the idea that there is any substantial difference between the Americans of to-day, and the Greeks and Romans of two thousand years ago—humbug—humbug—humbug.”

“I differ from you—I think we *do* present a much more respectable appearance; that we are much more acceptable objects in the sight of our Maker, so far as decency and sound morals are concerned, than the men of old—you yourself admit, too, that we have gained wonderfully upon them, in the way of knowledge—that we know far more about the earth we inhabit—about the heavens above us—that we have made precious discoveries, in all the kingdoms of Nature, that they dreamt not of.”

“I am not so sure of that—at any rate, the facts will not justify our bragging in the way we do—just look at the matter a moment—here we have had possession of the planet, heaven only knows how many thousand years, and how much have we really found out about it? How much of the mere crust of it have we faithfully explored, and subjugated to our purposes? How much of it still belongs to the beasts? How much is in the exclusive possession of the elements? We are fond of boasting of our victories over these last, but when they really arise in their might, what a wretched fight

we make of it! A pretty figure truly does the great lord of creation cut, when the tropics send forth their hurricanes, and the poles their squadrons of frowning icebergs. *They*, too, the venturesome fellows, who have tried to find out the secrets of these polar regions, what have they gained by the experiment? Where are they? Shall we ever know what has become of them? With all our wit, skill, science, will we ever be able to find them, or even bring their poor frozen bodies home, for Christian burial? Pretty fellows we, to crow about our exploits—why, we haven't yet had wit and energy enough to cut the two Americas apart—we still keep sending our ships thousands and thousands of superfluous miles, wasting alike lives, time, and money—it seems as if we wouldn't take the broadest hints that Nature herself gives us.” “But, my friend, be reasonable—these things require time—don't forget that our Continent only hove in sight four centuries ago.” “True, and is not that fact itself a perfect satire on the enterprise of man?—a very spirited, industrious set, to be sure, who have been so many ages finding out the limits of their place of residence! Ah! had we been the energetic, excellent set of creatures that you try to make us out, the world might have been worth living in.

But no—then as now, men have ever preferred fighting and frolicking and destroying, to working and studying and doing good—who does *not* prefer lolling over a novel, or lingering over the wine-cup, to digging into a dry book of mathematics, or going about hunting up objects of charity! Ah! when we think of the knowledge, prosperity, happiness, there would have been on the earth, had men really been wise, temperate, diligent, from the start, and then look at things as they are, we'll not be in a hurry, I imagine, to crow or bluster." "True—but has not a great change come over the world, of late? If we have been, hitherto, little better than a set of worthless ignoramuses, as you seem to think, are not the prospects ahead very different? Has not a new era dawned upon society? I think so. I think the astounding discoveries of the day, in physical science, are the precursors of wonderful revolutions, not only in the face of Nature, but in the character of man. Is there not, already, a restless energy, an insatiable spirit of curiosity abroad, that will not be quieted? a determination to explore, and sift things to the bottom? Is there not an amount of intellectual capital employed, in all sorts of great enterprises, without all parallel in the experience of the past? It really seems as if the earth were at last



to be thoroughly overhauled—the wilderness to be invaded, in right earnest—the wild beasts to be ferreted out of their dens—savage life to be put an end to—the hidden treasures, the dormant mineral wealth, the latent water-power of the planet, all to be brought to light, and pressed into the service of man. A grand new crusade seems to have commenced, to which the famous ones of old were mere trifles—what were *they*, after all, but so many superstitious, sanguinary expeditions; and for what? to recover a small patch and corner of the earth from the clutches of infidels. *Now*, we mean to redeem the whole length and breadth of it from rugged, savage Nature, and to win it over to the blessed dominion of civilization and Christianity—nor is *our* victory to be won by mere fire and sword—oh no—no such vulgar weapons for us. Steam and Lightning—*they* are the instruments that are to work these wonders—to bring about this glorious revolution—to bring the nations together—to create a grand interchange of interests, ideas, sentiments, all over the globe—to give us all, at last, a common language and a common faith—yes, to turn the whole race into one grand, peaceful, loving, thriving family. But of course you laugh at all this, and consider it so much sentimental twad-

dle." "I certainly cannot agree with you, nor do I see any such magnificent prospects ahead. That we are going to have pretty bustling times on the planet, for the next fifty years or so, seems clear enough—there will be a great increase of steamers and locomotives, no doubt—a great many thousand miles of telegraphic wires put up—a heavy agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial business done—an enormous amount of travel—a frightful multiplication of bags, barrels, bales, boxes, circulating in all directions. But how this is to revolutionize human character, I can't see, for the life of me. Men will be wider awake than ever, I suppose—will drive sharper bargains—will have more facts at their fingers' ends, and probably a good many more lies at the ends of their tongues. As to the dawning of a new era, I certainly *do* think that phrase better adapted to a Fourth of July Oration, than to the conversation of sensible men. Nor do I believe the day will ever come, when there will not be a pretty large assortment of wild beasts on the earth, and a fair sprinkling of savages—they may have to change their quarters from time to time—but while Commerce and Civilization are making one place too hot to hold them, Decay and Desolation will ever be on hand, to furnish them

with another. As to men being in any great hurry to become a band of brothers, I really can't see any violent symptoms of it, just yet—or that the English language is going to supplant all other languages—or that all other religions are going to be swallowed up in Christianity. Such vast predictions seem to me little better than the absurdities of Millerism." "Ah well, we don't agree upon these matters, that's very evident—I think you wrong, both in depreciating the past, as you do, and in supposing that the future is to be a mere repetition of it. I think, as I said before, that a magnificent drama has already begun in the moral and physical world, and that America is to play the leading part in it—that the developments which another century or two will bring about, will be altogether unparalleled in human history. What a spectacle will the Pacific and its shores and islands present, by that time—what myriads of beautiful steamers will be ploughing its waters—what stately cities will line its coasts—how will its now quiet, desolate gulfs and harbors be filled with life—what an interchange of men, and merchandise, and knowledge—yes, we shall carry Science, Art, Religion, to the remotest wilds of Asia—we shall put new life in her old veins—make a new Continent of her—root

out her miserable superstitions and despotisms, and give her in their place the priceless blessings of Liberty, and Education, and Christianity. And is there nothing grand, or inspiring in such a prospect as this? Does not one's heart swell within him, when—" "Hold on—hold on, if you please. Do you mean to say that all these miracles are to be worked, within a century or two? and yet, to do you justice, you are quite modest, compared with many of the orators and editors of the day—to hear them rattle on, you would suppose that before another ten years, all Siberia would be cut up by railroads and telegraphs, and overrun by a penny press. I must take the liberty of differing from these gentlemen. I can't help thinking that the nineteenth century, at least, will be gathered to its fathers, before the cultivation of the Anglo-Saxon language and literature will be considered a necessary part of the education of the young men of Tobolsk, or eke of Irkutsk; nor do I believe that there will *ever* be a very furious rush for the Waverley Novels in Kamschatka. It is a mighty easy matter to talk about these things, but when we come to try the experiment, when we try to extirpate the laws, customs, languages, religions, that have been planted for so many ages among these

hundreds of millions of Asiatics, we shall find it a *tolerably* tedious, painful, doubtful process, I should say—and should it succeed, should the consummation ever be reached, and Asia arrive at the pinnacle of (what we call) civilization, say, a thousand years hence, what will have happened in the meanwhile? will not poor, old, worn-out Europe have gone by the board? have relapsed into barbarism and decay? Will not London and Paris, by that time, have become as miserable ruins as Balbec and Palmyra now are? Shall we not be losing as much on one side of the planet, as we are gaining on the other? I have no more doubt of it than I have that the planet itself, by this time next year, will have got round to the same part of the heavens through which it is now whizzing. But I have no time to discuss further with you the possibilities of the future—the realities of the present are waiting for me, in the shape of dinner. And so I must bid you good morning.” A strange genius. We might have talked till sunset, without agreeing—and yet, I am quite too prone to indulge in the same gloomy, doubting views of life, myself—*can* they be the true ones? Oh no, no. What better evidence of that, than the very influence they exert upon the temper and conduct? how souring, depressing,

paralyzing! If we persist in cherishing them, we are sure to become misanthropists, and, probably, unprofitable idlers—perhaps, alas, before we know it, poor miserable drunkards. It is very easy to give way to them. There is a sneaking kind of comfort in dwelling on the worthlessness and monotony of existence—in reading the future by the past—in seeing the same eternal dreary round, alike in the experience of life and in the movements of the stars; in talking about the littleness of man, and of earth—it is easy to say that this planet of ours is of no more consequence in the great creation, than a solitary grape in a vineyard; it amuses the fancy, to dwell upon such images—but is there any real truth or soundness in these notions? Do they who express them, believe them in their very hearts? Are they not at war with all our best affections, our loftiest aspirations? Had men really cherished them, would they have ever done the little good they have in the world? No, it would long since have become a mere sty for hogs. How absurd and impious, too, to suppose that God should have lavished so much power and wisdom and goodness, in behalf of a set of beings, who, frail, ignorant, sinful that they are, have yet reached the highest point to which they

ever can go ; to suppose that this earth is to witness no grander exhibitions, moral or intellectual, than it has already witnessed ! *Has* then the planet seen its best days ? Are all the great truths of science found out ? Has art reached its highest point ? Have the long ages to come no new developments of any kind in store ? Are all future human performances on this great stage to be, at the best, mere wearisome repetitions of the past ? If so, indeed, then the curtain cannot drop too soon ; let the old orb go, it cannot be reduced to cinders too quickly ; and yet, it seems hard to destroy a world that has already produced its Washington, its Shakspeare, its Raphael—one can't help feeling that there are glorious things to come out of it yet—one can't help looking forward to magnificent results, from all these mighty movements in education and colonization, from these World's Fairs, and Conventions of all kinds, Religious, Political, Commercial, Literary, Scientific, Artistic, that are being held continually, both here and in Europe. Was there ever anything like it before ? When ever before has there been so much brain-work in the world ?—such an array of cultivated minds all acting at once ? And how easy to bring them together for consultation ; how easy to get up a grand

family gathering of the learned from all the corners of the land—lightning runs for them, steam fetches them; before we know it, almost, there are a thousand D. D.'s or M. D.'s at our doors. Is it reality, or is it magic? And is there nothing to come out of all this interchange of ideas, this collision of wits? No golden fruit to be gathered? No grand problems, social, moral, scientific, to be solved, for the benefit and improvement of the race? What folly to suppose it; what folly to take a discouraging, disheartening view of the future, when all is really so bright, and full of promise! How much better to have faith, faith in human nature, in the progress of the race, in the amendment and purification of the world we live in, no less than in the blessed world to come. Out upon this infernal skepticism—faith alone is fruitful—alone leads to good works—the other is barren, dreary, desolate, it benumbs our energies, contracts our hearts, is sure to make us cynics, nay, before it has done with us, turn us into very sots. Yes, better far to gulp down all the legends of Rome, to swallow every suspicious miracle of the smallest saint in the Calendar, than to give way to this horrible spirit of unbelief. And yet, how many around us seem to take a perverse pleasure in proclaiming their skepticism to the world, nay, declare aloud, that they



can see no God in Heaven, no immortality in the soul. Poor wretches! indeed, if they are in earnest, what can life be worth to *them*? What dignity, what meaning can it have? Its dark side, its bereavements, casualties, sufferings, what are they to *them*, but so many dismal scenes of some crushing merciless tragedy—and, at its best and brightest, with health and wealth, and everything to gratify the senses, still, what signifies it to men like these?—"a tale told by an idiot," a poor, vapid, pointless, tedious farce.

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AND so that old hunk ——— is out of the way at last—they buried the old miser yesterday—well, let him go, we are delighted to get rid of him; meaner wretch was never put under ground. He died hard, they say—not at all strange, that—what debt did he *ever* pay, with a good grace? Of course he would keep nature out of her dues as long as he could—for the same reason, the old scamp would never allow any flesh upon those sorry bones of his—he wished to cheat the worms out of their customary meal—'twas his way—he kept it up to the last—his very last words were an injunction that

there should be no funeral. He was wise—who, under heaven, save hireings, would have gone to it? The bare idea of acting as pall-bearer to such a wretch is loathsome; mourning carriages for such a brute as *he* was? Why, he positively hadn't friends enough to fill a sulky—prayers, and sighs, and tears over *his* grave, indeed—precious crocodiles, who would let fall a drop for *him*—his very heirs couldn't squeeze out brine enough to take a mosquito off its feet; will the very grass condescend to grow over such a carcass? Will any daisy or violet, think you, be found in its neighborhood? No, no—thorns, thistles, briars, nettles, they are the only proper embroidery for such a resting place as his. But am I not too severe upon him? Was there nothing good about the man? Nay, was there ever a wretch so vile and abject, that some few tributary tears could not be spared at his departure, some brief petition be put up in behalf of his poor, sinful soul? What, not even his wife? Wife, say you? Poor thing, he sent her to her long home, years and years ago; yes, teased the very soul out of her, by his cursed meanness and neglect—the scoundrel—tears for *him*, indeed—not a drop—not a drop. Let no dog dare whine for him, even; there is no danger of *that*,

though, they knew him too well—catch *them* following such a fellow as he was; they took to their heels at the very sight of him. The brute has left nearly a million of dollars, they say, but no will; no, he couldn't bring himself to that—the mere thought of formally abandoning possession of his pile, even to his children, was altogether intolerable to him. Well, the law will do them justice; poor fellows, they might have hanged, drowned or starved, or ever he would have given them a stiver, while living; and now, this sudden avalanche of riches comes rushing and tumbling in upon them, and will, no doubt, be the ruin of them. Oh, how they must honor the memory of such a father! what an unspeakable treasure must a lock of his hair be to them, at this moment! what a pearl of great price, his autograph! that veteran hat, too, those venerable boots, in which he took his last airing, oh, what fond, precious memories come clustering round them, as they meet the gaze of these devoted sons; I think I see them, now, scolding and scuffling for the possession of these priceless mementoes. Pah! pah! pah! But why so savage and bitter upon the poor wretch? Is it Christianlike, is it decent, now that he has gone to his dread account? *What* an account—dreary,

dreary record—not a bright spot in it—not one ray of sunshine—one long, dismal catalogue of petty meannesses and villanies—threescore years was he upon the earth, and in all that period, not one penny of his money, not one moment of his time, not one thought of his heart did he bestow upon any noble or deserving enterprise; not a solitary tear of widow or of orphan did he dry; not one poor beggar's heart did he ever make glad; no, he lived and died for dollars, dollars, dollars. To see them multiply, and rise in glittering heaps around him, that was his delight, his alpha and omega, his be-all and his end-all. Dollars were at once wife, children, friends; the gods of his idolatry; *with* them, what cared he for kicks, or cuffs, or contumelies? without them, what was honor, fame, glory? Poor, deluded man; what magnificent things he might have done with his money; what opportunities he had of scattering blessings and comforts around him; what precious seed he might have sown, that would have yielded glorious fruit hereafter; what noble charities he might have founded; how his name might have been blessed, in the long generations to come after him; nay, had he even repented on his death-bed, had he apologized to the world for his past life, by his benefactions to coloni-

zation, or temperance, or any other noble cause, he might have been forgiven, and his memory respected; but he would not—he even sneered at and laughed to scorn all such enterprises, and lo, the result: he dies despised, without friend or mourner; dies like a dog in a ditch; his very children will hardly remember where his grave is, a twelvemonth hence. Well, is it not all fair? is it not of his own seeking? the man who lived such a life, deserved to die just such a death. What a career, to be sure; how abject, how contemptible; how utterly devoid, too, of all those decencies, refinements, amenities, that make existence palatable! What cared he for company or amusements, the beauties of nature, the delights of art? the very stars over his head, what were they to him, but so many doubloons, which he was mad that he could not clutch? What were books, or pictures, or music to *him*? *He* would as lief have seen a two-headed calf, as the glorious transfiguration itself—he'd have begrudged either sight the outlay of a copper. What to him the divine poetry of Shakspeare, the bewitching stories of Scott? one leaf of his filthy cash-book was dearer to him than them all—no, he would not have exchanged the smallest, raggedest bank-note, for all the Last Suppers and Auroras of Morghen. The

good book itself, what was it to such a close-fisted wretch as this?—did I not absolutely hear him, on one occasion, in a commissioner's office, cursing it and consigning it to eternal flames, because, forsooth, it had been the innocent means of flinging him, as he expressed it, out of a few shillings in the way of affidavits?—the old scamp. The only entertainment he was ever known to partake of, was an occasional game of chequers—there was something, no doubt, in the low, tricky dexterity which this game calls out, that harmonized admirably with that sordid, over-reaching nature of his. What a life—what a soul to go through the world with! Where is it now? What is to become of it? Some bitter punishment there must needs be in store for it—such deliberate, systematic, horrible perversion of the gift of existence cannot be passed over. But when will that punishment begin? How long is it to last? Is there any probation beyond the grave? or do we go straight from hence to retribution? Fearfully interesting questions these—who can answer them?—who can give us any comfortable light upon the matter? Can it be, that the character we form here is to cling to us through all eternity? Is then this vile, sordid wretch, who was a perfect disgrace and nuisance to the world he lived in, to go

on continually augmenting his vileness and rascality? Is he, in every new world that he may be sent to, in every successive sphere of action, to keep up the same loathsome practices, to continue the same eye-sore and abomination to the universe, and to keep on in this way for ever, and ever, and ever? —'tis too horrible a doctrine to believe—or is he to be a sufferer only, shut up for ever in some dismal place of torment, there to lie, cursing and howling, howling and cursing, world without end? But *can* God be so cruel as that? Can any amount of earthly guilt earn eternal tortures? Is it not wiser to suppose, that to every human soul, be it never so depraved and wretched, sooner or later, comes the glorious period of regeneration; that the meanest of earth's misers, the most beastly of its debauchees, the blackest of its murderers, has yet some little speck of white in him, some latent principle of good, that *will* finally be developed, *will* triumph in the end? Fiery trials there must be, long and bitter sufferings, before this blessed revolution in his nature comes to pass, but come it will. A new career will be opened to him, at last; his faculties, purified and exalted, will all be employed in the service of heaven. Is this mere idle prattle? Why, may not this very wretch, whom they hid in the

earth yesterday, whom no man loved, who disfigured every scene that he frequented, to get rid of whom seemed a positive blessing to his brethren, why may not even he, in God's infinite wisdom and goodness, yet be destined to become a glorious angel? Are there not, even now, bright seraphs round the throne, who once were just as abject, groveling earth-worms, degraded, desperate sinners? Through what bitter discipline, through what terrible punishments, through what varieties of untried being, through what new scenes and changes they have passed, in the long flight of ages, ere they have reached this grand consummation, who, alas, can tell?—yet, who does not hope to know, to see these dread mysteries expounded, to see more and more of the workings of God's government, to go on, hereafter, constantly gaining a more and more enlightened admiration of, constantly rendering a more and more intelligent obedience to, the laws of the Great Father and Judge of all? Why cannot I cherish and cling fast to this faith, this hope? what is life worth without them? This poor sinner, then, whom they consigned to the earth so ignominiously, surely there is yet some bright destiny in store for him—he is not to play this vile part for ever; to be a perpetual instrument of mis-



chief; nor is he to howl for ever in some dark and dismal hell—else far, far better that that poor soul of his should rot and perish with its perishing body. And yet *that* thought is the most horrible of all—annihilation? oh, no, no—it may not, cannot be; nature rebels against it; common sense belies it—what, are the monuments we raise to men, to last for ages, and the men themselves, after a few short years of troubled life, to sink down into utter nothingness? Is the example of Washington a treasure that cannot perish, his memory to stand while stands the world, while he himself has become no more than a sorry handfull of worthless dust? Beautiful, rational doctrine! Is a breath of tainted air, or a stray bullet, or a falling brick, or some other agency as trivial, to consign to eternal slumber the mighty intellect of a Bacon, to drop the curtain for ever upon the glorious career of a Howard? Monstrous credulity, that can believe this—yet how many profess to believe it—speak to these same men, of Enoch walking with God, of Elijah borne to heaven by the whirlwind, or of the resurrection, and they will laugh in your face, and call them so many clumsy tales, contrived by priests—yet are they ready to swallow a doctrine like this, which, were it true, would turn life into the most

paltry and wretched of mummeries, its best affections, its highest aspirations, into mere themes of mockery and contempt. Yes, if these things be so, indeed, what a bitter mockery are our tears, and funeral rites, and monuments, and the flowers that deck the graves of those we love. Did, then, he who was lately taken, in the glorious morning of life, who had just buckled on his armor for the fight, to whom nature had been so bounteous, for whom education had done so much, did he all at once perish and wither away, and become of no more value than a noisome weed? Is this the end of all those gifts and acquirements?—this the reply to all our hopes and prayers? Who dare talk about God's Wisdom and Goodness, then? He is a savage, merciless tyrant, if this be so. Those dear babes, too, who were snatched away from us, sweet buds of love and promise, have they then utterly perished? Is there to be no blossoming for them, in some brighter world? Are they of less account than the toys they played with, and which we treasure as memorials of them? What absurd weakness, then, to weep over them, to dwell upon their little winning ways and pretty words, to call in the artist's skill to revive their lovely faces. But why dwell longer on the matter? Who will so insult his

heart and his understanding, as to entertain, for a moment, a doctrine so degrading, so crushing as this?

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I HAVE just read a letter from my dear old friend ———. How like him it is! full of pleasant, amiable things—just like his face, all smiles and sunshine; such a hand too, and for a man of fourscore—fair, round, clear, as the heart of the writer; every *t* crossed—not an *i* defrauded of its dot; no paralysis, there—no marks of hot haste, or of ill temper, in *that* signature; and then such charming sentiments—so gracious, and candid, and sensible. And he talks in the same way—always cheerful—always a kind word for a friend—always ready to do justice to both sides of a question, with a decided preference for the bright side—as fair a listener, too, as he is talker—never disposed to take more than his lawful share of the conversation; to be sure, we are always delighted to have him run away with the whole of it—we are certain to get something worth carrying home, in the way of anecdote or sentiment, when he has the floor. Oh, what a treat it is to meet such a character—yes, it is really

charming, in this age of bigots, and ultraists, and hobby-striders, to come across a man so wise and calm and tolerant and amiable—a man who can be judge, as well as advocate—who can hear his opponent with patience and courtesy to the end—who is not mad with every one whom he cannot convert to his own views—who is willing to surrender his opinions to superior arguments—who is not too proud to take advice—who can put his experience to a good use—who can remember the mortifications and defeats, as well as the triumphs of the past—who can look men and things full in the face—take a tranquil, philosophical survey of all the bearings of a question—a man, who, while alive to every generous impulse, and ready to do justice to everything truly meritorious, yet, will not be taken off his feet by every wild mad-cap scheme that turns up, will not surrender his heart and purse to every smooth-faced, smooth-spoken scoundrel that sees fit to echo his opinions—a man, who, while he hates slavery, still loves his country—who can see the difference between the orderly, judicious movements of colonizationists, and the outrageous, fatal schemes of abolitionists—who, while he has a horror of intemperance, does not therefore see a nest of devils lurking in every glass of generous wine that comes

along, nor will hesitate to take his one, two, or three of them, occasionally, with his dinner. Why should he? What did the Lord send good wine for, but to warm just such noble old hearts as his? Bless him—would there were more like him—the world would be far better worth living in. Why can't *I* take things as coolly? Why can't I keep my temper as he does? What a vein of humor he has, too—what a store of anecdotes—all pleasant ones—nothing malicious about them—pretty pungent, too, some of them, but a wholesome bitter—nothing low or venomous in them—how he loves to go back to the old revolutionary times—the days of the Patres Conscripti. He could talk all day with you about Franklin and Adams and Jefferson and Jay and Sherman and the rest of them; his proudest recollection, though, is having been patted on the head, when he was a youngster, by the great Pater Patriæ himself—he has felt better for it, he says, ever since—the thought of it has kept him out of many a scrape—no doubt of it—surely, there must have been magic in such a benediction—indeed, there are few greater treats than to hear him on these themes, when he gets once fairly warmed up—how his eye lights up—how he brings out those fine deep notes of his—the effect is truly dramatic—the

figures seem ready to start from the canvass—no professed story-teller on the quay of Naples could be more animated. Wouldn't Matthews have relished him?—how much he would have got out of him, too—Shakspeare would have given him a post of honor, in some play or other, had he been a neighbor. But hasn't he done it, already? To be sure he has—old Gonzalo, in the *Tempest*—yes, the very man, the same chatty, cheerful, philosophical old gentleman, to a hair—had ——— been in that gale, he'd have behaved just as the honest Counselor did, keeping up his good humor to the last—looking out for the best—comforting those about him—yes, prattling away in the same half-playful, half-serious strain, so long as he could keep his head above water. Bless his old soul!—the idea of his ever being *cursed*, by God or man, is too monstrous—the idea of *his* being consigned to a place of torment—*he* in hell? A pretty figure he'd cut there, to be sure. Falstaff would not look more out of place, in a pulpit—Hamlet, on an omnibus-box; the sweet Ophelia herself, on a treadmill—oh no—besides, Satan knows his own interests too well for that; such a spirit would work a dangerous revolution in his dominions—it would be making the realms of wo altogether too cheerful and

agreeable, if such customers were admitted—no—far different quarters will be assigned *him*, in spirit land. And is he, indeed, so excellent a man? Does his character justify such enthusiasm? Isn't this amiability, after all, the result of temperament, rather than of self-government? Besides, hasn't he had things pretty much his own way, all his life? Hasn't his voyage been a smooth and delightful one, from the very start? No, no, no—far from it—he has had his full share of squalls and storms—his full allowance of losses and bereavements—grievous and bitter ones, too—no man, indeed, has had more to test his temper, and thoroughly search his heart—and how triumphantly has he come out of his trials—how nobly has he borne his losses! It is not many years since he had to part with his wife—such a wife as she was—no lovelier woman ever brightened a home—*he* knew her—*he* appreciated her. Brutus was not prouder of his Portia—what a happy time they had together—but she shortened her life, good woman—yes, she overworked herself—wore herself out long before her time—it was her way—she could not rest easy, while there was anybody about her uncomfortable—night and day, day and night, she was eternally contriving and toiling, for the gratification of her family, and the

families of her children. But she is gone, and if there is any one part of paradise brighter and sweeter than the rest, she is there—here was a blow for a man to stagger under. And then his children—are they not nearly all dead? Fine, promising sons, and lovely daughters, has he not consigned them, one after another, to the grave? How he loved them—how they loved and honored him! It was delightful to see such intercourse—so frank, so cordial. What a fireside it made, to be sure. Ah, his *was* a home. How many places are there, that we call homes, that are utterly without claim to that dear title; whose inmates might as well be in so many different planets, so far as any union of souls is concerned; who, when they meet at meals, are as stiff and formal and silent as so many strangers at a table d'hôte; whose parlors are cheerless, joyless, funless—chillier than so many ice-houses, dismallier than so many vaults. Who are these mute, anxious-looking, self-absorbed creatures, scattered about in them? Call you *this* a gathering of loving kindred?—say rather, a group of animated grave-stones—a precious family circle, truly. How many homes, too, are there far worse than this—to which the very caves of hermits, the very dens of robbers are comparatively



cheerful, desirable places—in which naught is ever seen but scowls and scornful looks and angry gestures; nothing ever heard but taunts and sneers and curses—there is no lack of them in this huge town of ours; even in its best and fairest quarters, are they not to be found?—and in the others, are there not whole streets full of them? Horrible holes!—as we go by them we prick up our ears involuntarily; we are almost disappointed at not hearing pistol shots and shrieks and cries of murder—what volleys of oaths, what torrents of filth are perpetually circulating through vast neighborhoods of this description! Oh, when one thinks of such evil haunts as these, and then of such a serene, sunshiny, charming home as ——— once had, is it not enough to overwhelm one? What can these frightful contrasts mean—these mysterious arrangements of Providence? But that dear home was soon broken up—Death came and stole away its jewels; creditors came, too, and besieged it and laid it waste. He was a rich man once—what a house he kept, then; how like a prince he lived; what charming people he gathered round him. It's all over now—poor man, his means are of the slenderest; he has barely saved enough from the wreck to enable him to scratch along for the few remaining years of his

pilgrimage; and yct how bright he keeps, and amiable—he has always a kind greeting ready, a pleasant joke to spare; no millionaire in town wears half so contented a face; it does you good to look at it; such sensibility, such intelligence, such a smile, too—not the unmeaning smile of your mere day-dreamer, your man of abstractions, who is so absorbed in his own schemes and visions, that he can find no time or thought for the joys or sorrows of those about him; still less, is it the vacant grin which bespeaks a stupid, stagnant nature, through whose brain the blood scarce flows, whose heart has not substance enough to it for any passion to take hold of—oh no—but an honest, cordial, delightful expression, which captivates you at once; which tells you, most distinctly, that its owner is happy himself, and does all he can to make others so—and so he does, and always has—has he not, indeed, acquitted himself most handsomely, alike as a gentleman, a philosopher, and a Christian? To be sure, he has made no distinct profession of Religion; he seems to be mightily indifferent about sects and creeds and ceremonies—too much so, perhaps. I heard him say, indeed, once, that he did not care the toss of a copper whether his faith had thirty-nine articles in it or thirty-nine hundred, and

that it did not make a straw's difference to *him*, whether the minister officiated in a surplice or a roundabout, so long as his heart was in the matter—he has a frank, incautious way of expressing himself on these subjects, which of course exposes him to misrepresentation. How many precisians are there, who would have rolled up their eyes in pious horror at this very speech, who, so far as the essentials of goodness are concerned, are not even worthy to black his boots! For, though thus negligent about the mere forms of Christianity, has he not, all his life long, been faithfully practising its virtues? Has he not been conferring benefits, forgiving injuries, bridling his tongue, subduing his appetites, drying ten thousand tears for every one that he has caused to flow? Who dare say, then, that he is not a good Christian? *Poor* man, did I call him just now?—what a mistake—he poor, indeed, who has life's two most precious treasures—a good temper, an approving conscience. Oh what charming property to hold, and to cling fast to, and to carry out of the world with us! what a sure passport, too, for the great journey ahead!—thus equipped, thus accredited, who shall molest us, who shall not give us a courteous reception? In what part of creation may not my dear friend feel safe? Where

not hold up his head in modest confidence? Well, he'll soon have to leave us—soon be among the angels; and yet I don't see why he shouldn't stay with us some ten or fifteen years longer. I hope so; I can't bear to think of losing sight of his cheerful face, of getting no more of his pleasant handwriting. And why may I not hope to meet him hereafter, and hear him, in some brighter world, talk over his earthly experience in the same agreeable strain in which he chats about old times here? I *do* hope so; to meet him and all other dear friends and kindred, ay, all the choice spirits that have ever been upon the earth; without such hope, what an intolerable burthen life would become—meanwhile, I am for making the most of the old gentleman, here below; I am for keeping him to the very last moment; I want to have a good many pleasant dishes of chat with him, after the old sort; I want to get a good many more of his charming, heart-cheering epistles.

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HEIGH ho—what a poor devil I seem to be this fine morning! And I *had* begun to think that I was getting better and heartier; but no, 'tis the

same old story over again. Well, I deserve it; I have disobeyed the doctor's injunctions; have been using my head and neglecting my heels, and I have got to pay for it; yes, this is pay-day. Doesn't this hot, throbbing brain tell me so, plain enough? these dim, heavy eyes, these relaxed muscles about my mouth, this dry skin? Oh, how restless and nervous I feel!—so irritable, too; couldn't I fire off a volley of oaths, now, that would put the profanest postilion in France to the blush, that would make the most voluble vetturino in Italy whistle in his amazement? What disagreeable things and persons keep coming into my mind continually! I was even now having a half dozen visionary bouts at fisticuffs all at once, with as many rascally acquaintances. Didn't I see them afterwards, too, all grouped on the boiler-deck of a Mississippi steamboat, the captain drunk, the engineer asleep, the boat driving along at a furious rate—crack, crack, crack went the boilers, and these same fellows were all blown into the air, and down they came again with a splash into the water; poor, scalded, mangled, slaughtered wretches; surely, my heart bled for them? not a bit of it, not a bit of it; I was tickled, positively tickled at the sight; I all but gave three cheers; had Beelzebub himself been by, I could

have shaken hands and exchanged congratulations with him on the occasion. For shame, man, for shame! how *can* I give way to these diabolical feelings?—and there is that blessed Bible, too, all this time, lying on my table; how dare I look it in the face? And is *this* the frame of mind for a Christian to be in? *this* the course of conduct prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount? I'll read a chapter; it may do me some good, perhaps; may bring me back to reason. Ah, I have opened on the very sermon itself—"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the"—but no, no, no; let me not insult these divine beatitudes; let me not profane them with my lips, feeling, as I do, my heart to be all full of gall and bitterness. Oh no; railings and cursings are far more in keeping with *my* temper—

"Lay on, Macduff,  
And *damned* be he who first cries hold, enough."

*that's* the way I feel—that I can comprehend and sympathize with—yes, I can relish the tremendous emphasis which the frenzied, desperate Macbeth lays on that word, *damned*. But those sublime

benedictions, alas, I feel them not—I understand them not—Lear cursing his daughters, Timon hurling his imprecations upon Athens, Othello summoning black vengeance from her hollow cell, *these* things I can enjoy, can dwell upon them with savage pleasure—wasn't I repeating the last of those passages to myself, this very minute, with wicked glee?

“Yield up, O Love, thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate—swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 'tis of aspics' tongues—”

Ugh, how fine that last line is—I think I hear the hissing of ten thousand hellish snakes in it. Fie, fie, fie, why *will* I cherish these angry passions? let me be patient. It *is* hard, though, that I should be treated in this way—that I cannot be allowed to take a little mental food occasionally—that I may not, once in a while, treat the immortal part of me, without my body's kicking up this infernal row and uproar about it, reminding me perpetually of the vile bondage to which I am subjected. Don't tell me that life is worth having on such terms as these—so far from its being a boon, I call it a downright dose. Confound it! I am cheated both ways—I am defrauded alike of the rational enjoyments of the

man, and of the sensual gratifications, the high health of the beast. I wish, oftentimes, in the bitterness of my heart, that I *had* been a quadruped—why wasn't I a Polar bear, for instance? I should have got far more out of life—what strength, what an appetite, yes, what glorious endowments of wind, limb, and stomach, would have been my portion—I could have run my hundred miles a day, and swam my fifty—what hearty hugs, what stirring fights I should have had—what magnificent meals of fish, and seals, and young whales in their season, with every now and then a brace or two of Greenland babies, by way of change—what long cozy naps, too, free from nightmares, all through the winter—what charming summer excursions on the ice—wouldn't it have been delightful?—such a pleasant circle of enjoyments, such an unfailing round of excitements. Oh, would not such a career as this have been quite as satisfactory to myself, as acceptable to the Creator, as the tame, paltry, good-for-nothing kind of life that I am now leading? Ah, well—submit—submit—submit—this sneering and grumbling will not mend the matter; 'tis so written; 'tis decreed that I must go through the world, a poor cripple, an ignoramus, a nobody—I must descend, a very numskull, to my grave—the



golden gates of knowledge are barred against me—the avenues of ambition, business, philanthropy, I may not explore them—the flowery paths of pleasure, they, too, are not for me; they are reserved for stronger heads and nerves than mine. Well, most people would say, perhaps, or at least their actions say for them, that this last is, after all, the only loss worth grumbling about—the idea of fretting over the want of learning, reputation, fame, and such like windy humbugs, why how silly—why shouldn't *I* get along without them, as well as nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of my brethren? how unreasonable—*they* don't take on so—no, indeed—they are perfectly satisfied with the arrangement—what care they, forsooth, whether or not their brains be lined with knowledge, so long as their stomachs are stuffed with good cheer, their purses with hard dollars? What care they for the “all hail hereafter,” so long as the ignorant present is a comfortable, jolly one?—that's *their* view of the matter—so they talk, and so they live, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and die, and crumble into dust, and their tombstones crumble after them, and it is as if they had never been. Their names may occasionally linger on the earth awhile, after their owners are gone, i. e., in directories, account books, legal advertisements, and

such like precious documents—or on old door-plates or umbrella handles—their faces may survive awhile in atrocious portraits—but these mementoes are soon kicked out of the way, and it is all over with them—so far as posterity are concerned, such fellows are of no more account than the very flies that bit them, the very hogs that they devoured, when living. “Well,” says one of them, perhaps, in reply, “well, be it so, what care we? posterity be hanged—are the learned, and powerful, and famous of the earth any better off, in the long run? are they any happier in their day and generation? This fame, that you keep talking about, is pretty poor pay, after all—a pretty shabby return for all the sleepless nights, and anxious days, and aching brains it costs—what difference is it going to make to a poor fellow, whether posterity gets wind of him, or no? whether a frail cross of wood is stuck up over his last resting place, or a huge pile of marble, carved all over with extravagant allegories and pompous lies in Latin? My next door neighbor is a famous man—no doubt he will be remembered, and his books be read with pleasure, a thousand years hence, while *I* shall be forgotten the very moment that my debts are paid and my estate settled—but what folly to worry and get mad about

it—meanwhile, am I not having tenfold more fun and pleasure than he ever dreamt of, for all his noddlefull of knowledge? Let him bend over his musty books, then, for all me—let him scribble away, for the benefit of an ungrateful posterity. Give *me* a jolly time of it with my contemporaries—secure me that, and posterity and ancestry both be hanged, for aught I care.” Well, the man’s honest—he avows, openly, what the great mass of us do, in our actions—and yet, what sentiments!—how flip-pant, how reckless, how utterly unsound!—what, do you mean, then, deliberately to say, that the pleasures of the senses, the short-lived enjoyments that the bottle, and the harlot, and the dice-box can give a man, are the only part of life worth having? and do you dismiss, with a sneer of contempt, the pure, deep, inexhaustible delights of the student? You epicures and profligates, then, are the only fellows that are on the right track, that are getting anything for your money, and the scholar is wrong, altogether wrong in the matter? Yes, a poor, self-deceiving, self-defrauding visionary and shadow-chaser—you hardly know whether to pity, or to laugh at, his absurd infatuation. Oh, out upon such unblushing impudence, such rascally views of life as these! we are not to be fooled by them any longer—you may

try, indeed, to make them pass current with us; you may dress them up in all the wit of a Congreve or a Sheridan; you may enshrine them in verse more musical than that of Horace or of Herrick; you may wed them to strains more delicious than ever haunted the brain of a Rossini; you may get ruby lips to plead for them, and sparkling eyes to smile upon them, yet we will not be deceived—fascinated, perhaps, we may be, ensnared for a season, but our eyes *will* be opened at last, to their native hideousness—no, we are not going to surrender our freedom always, to sell ourselves to ruin and despair for such abominable follies as these. Silence, then, ye profane sensualists! we will listen no longer to your miserable sophistries—and as for your flippant sneers and pity, the scholar flings them back in scorn—it enters not into your shallow hearts to conceive of the depth, the fervor, the intensity of *his* pleasures—there is some excuse for *his* excesses, something honorable in *his* servitude—*yours* is an ignominious, beastly slavery. Pretty fellows, to talk about infatuation—it is a mighty easy and convenient thing, too, for you epicures to cry down fame, and the love of it, and to say that it is of no value to a man after death—but what do you know about the matter?—for aught you know, the soul

of Shakspeare may be musing, this very moment, in pleasant vein, on the mighty power which his works are exerting on human hearts, and which every hour is extending and deepening—for aught you know, his plays are already performed, (ay, and altogether finer ones than he wrote on earth) in half the planets of the universe—such audiences, too, as he has had—Homer has heard them, and Virgil, and Dante, and Tasso, all his glorious brother bards of olden times—for aught you can say to the contrary, all these gifted, blessed spirits may, even now, be holding sweet converse together. Of course, you will sneer at all this, and reply, fudge! humbug! silly dreams!—be it so; I *believe* in such dreams myself—I believe they do a man good, keep him out of mischief, keep alive a holy enthusiasm in his heart, inspire him with a lofty ambition, put a new meaning and beauty into all the scenes of earth, all the phenomena of life—*your* sensual, skeptical notions are fatal to all that is good, venerable, lovely. Precious fellows, *you*, to sneer at musty books, as you call them—why, what would have become of the world without them?—a world without any history or poetry in it?—a pretty place to be sure. But why waste one's breath, arguing such a point? you are not in earnest, in avowing such abominable sen-

timents—you know well enough, that if they were faithfully carried out, men would, ere the next generation had fairly got its growth, become so many filthy swine, this beautiful earth a vile pen—oh, no, 'tis mere reckless, desperate talk—"wild, whirling" words with which you would fain drown the voice of conscience. If you would but listen to that voice, would act up to your real convictions in the matter, if you had the courage to throw your bottles to the dogs, and to take to your books, forthwith, and in right earnest, what a glorious revolution we should have of it, what a delightful world we should have to live in. But when have men ever *had* that courage? Have not flesh and sense had it pretty much their own way always? Has not appetite carried the day against reason from the very start? Did not Noah himself, whom God took so much pains to save—did not even *he*, ere the earth was fairly dry, most shamefully forget himself, most ingloriously fall before the fascinations of the wine cup? Have not his descendants, from that day to this, hailed with frantic delight everything that had intoxication in it, everything that could help them run away from their consciences and their duties? Did they not greet with wild enthusiasm the fatal, accursed tobacco, enemy of the race?—did it not

take like wildfire, circulating with incredible swift-  
ness all over the planet, while the poor, innocent  
potato, man's true friend and nourisher, was over-  
looked or despised, and only after long years of  
struggle, found its true place, and was duly recog-  
nized amongst the choice gifts of heaven? And  
have we not always been just such fools in our  
selections? always hugging the poisons to our  
bosoms, and turning our backs upon the wholesome  
pleasures of life? evermore crucifying our bene-  
factors, throwing stones at those who have come to  
us with words of wisdom and of warning, while  
we have been prompt to greet with acclamations, to  
load with honors, any wretch that would cater to  
our appetites, that would enlarge the circle of our  
indulgences? And would you wilfully foster and de-  
velop these sensual, devilish propensities of our  
nature? Would you consummate matters by taking  
away our books and our meditations? Are we not  
sufficiently bestial already? With all the counter-  
acting, elevating influences of religion, and science,  
and art, and sentiment, are not the great majority  
of us, now, little better than so many cattle, roam-  
ing about with our heads to the ground, with no  
eyes save for the garbage under our noses? But  
enough of this—this may be a true picture of human

nature—it certainly is a sufficiently gloomy, perhaps bitter one. Oh, Lord, I ought not to be sitting here, giving way to such meditations—poor medicine, truly, for aching heads and teasing nerves—far better to be up and stirring—well, well, well, well, well, here comes my gruel—let's have it—if it does me no good, it will at least stop for a while this fretting, grumbling mouth of mine.

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ANOTHER paltry, paltry day—no pleasure or profit have I got out of it—no, not a single agreeable sensation, not a new idea, not a solitary glimpse of any truth worth knowing, not a moment's pleasant chat with a friend, have I had, but a peevish, solitary, contemptible time of it. Well, 'tis no novelty, I have had a great many such rascally days in my allowance—why, heaven only knows—I certainly have not earned them—I have committed no excesses, mental or bodily, that I know of—my parents are not to blame in the matter, either—their constitutions are, and ever have been, excellent—still less can I lay these cursed sensations to my grandparents, for four haler, healthier, worthier people, never went through their threescore years and ten,



God bless them—no, I am in, neither by descent nor purchase, as the lawyers have it—a queer title, to be sure—well, nobody will dispute it. Ah, dear me, what a humbug of a life—I have been turning over some fifty books, at least, this morning, from the Holy Bible down to Kicklebungs on the Rhine, and not one of them can I get interested in—even ———’s frothy, windy editorials are too deep for me—what a precious condition my immortal soul is getting into—what an ignorant imbecile I am fast becoming—were I to die to-morrow, what a shabby figure I should cut in the next world—what could I tell them about the place I came from?—a stupid traveller, indeed—my company wouldn’t pay at all—they wouldn’t be civil to me—the very angels would give me the cold wing—I should make as sorry an exhibition of myself as my countrymen too often do abroad, when over-persuaded by their better halves, in the evening of life, to take a peep at the antique portions of the planet. Some fine summer day, at some Swiss or Rhenish table d’hote, one of these worthy men finds himself suddenly confronted with an intelligent foreigner, who, addressing him very politely in French or German, begs him to favor him with some few explanations on certain difficult, abstruse points, connected with

that beautiful but complicated structure, the Constitution of the United States. What a situation for our friend; he is just about as competent to the task as a youthful negro, kicking up his heels, in naturalibus, in the streets of Congo or Loango, would be competent to furnish an elaborate description of the steam engine—poor fellow, what *should* he know about the matter? has he not been toiling like a galley-slave all his days; working, working, working, night and day, day and night, up to his very eyelids, in soap, or lard, or rum, or sugar? his only approach to anything like literature, being a hasty perusal of the morning papers? what, the old Harry, does he know about the scenery, history, government of his country? why, to give any clear answers to the questions proposed, even in his vernacular, would be a terrible undertaking for him; but as to airing his views on these points, in any other language, the bare idea of the thing would make any acquaintance of his whistle. Unfortunate man! how gladly would he exchange the sublime scenery around him, for a snug berth in Simms' hole; how willingly he would make for the antipodes, cheerfully taking all risks of central heat, en route;—how he stammers, blushes, stutters, mutters, and, finally, with a convulsive pantomimic move-

ment, refers the stranger to his wife, who, somehow or other, contrives to get him out of the scrape in what *she*, doubtless, considers good French. Just such a shabby, sheepish, pitiful figure should I cut in the other world—what information worth having, could I give them about this earth of ours?—what know I of its scenery, antiquities, history, laws, manners, usages? of its trees, flowers, fruits, rocks, minerals, water-courses, birds, beasts, fishes? why, the humblest science in the circle, the meanest art on the list, what sort of an examination could I stand upon it? Yes, I shall go out of the world, with no more adequate, intelligent notion of its contents, than a traveller would have of the contents of St. Peters, or of the Louvre, from a single, hurried, teasing, bewildering visit. Well—so it is—most true, and most infernally mortifying. But suppose it had been otherwise—suppose I had had Methusaleh's lease of life, and a glorious constitution into the bargain—suppose I had studied faithfully, all that time, making due allowances for all bodily requirements, and had kept my health and faculties sound, through it all—should I not still have died, a comparative ignoramus? Should I not still have been a mere pebble-gatherer, on the great sea-shore of Truth? Nay,

had I exhausted all the learning that Earth had to offer, in each department, still what a mere mite would it all amount to, in the great sum of truth stored up in this vast Universe—why grumble then, about my ignorance? why not take a philosophical view of the matter, and be resigned? What a strange arrangement, by the way, it seems in our poor eyes, that all these long lives should have come off, at a period when the world was least interesting. *Now*, a man might manage to find employment for his ten centuries, but how under heaven Methusaleh got through with them, is a puzzler, indeed. Travelling, say you? why, what was there to see, but the face of Nature? fine mountain scenery, to be sure, grand sea views, charming pastoral landscapes—but one soon gets tired of mere Nature. Art must come in, after all, to make the thing really interesting. Where were their cities? Small, scanty, unentertaining ones, doubtless—their roads, narrow, rough, tedious. How *did* they get along without steamboats and railroads, and telegraphs? no penny press, then—no cheap publications—no theatres, operas, ballets—no world's fairs and crystal palaces—little or nothing in the way of manufactures, commerce in its cradle, navigation of the most timid, creeping

kind—why, what was there on earth to live for? *That*, one would have said, would have been the time, of all others, to have put men on the short allowance of threescore and ten—now, when the world is so crowded with objects of interest of all sorts, we might easily use up fivefold that amount, with pleasure and advantage. Is it slanderous to suggest that these dear old “earliest inhabitants” of the planet must have been far less witty, brilliant, and intellectual than their short-lived descendants? exemplary as many of them were, were they not somewhat stupid withal? It is melancholy to think how much of their time must have been spent in dozing, how much in whittling, how much in mere twiddling of their thumbs—and oh, how *did* they manage for Tobacco? the idea of ten centuries of earth, and no pipe to smoke, is too painful to dwell upon. But what stuff is this I am talking? whither is my whimsical, profane fancy leading me? Well, it took me away from myself, any how—yes, I had positively forgotten, for a moment, what a poor, rickety wretch I was. But the reaction is at hand—oh, it is returning with a vengeance—that’s right—throb, throb, throb away, hot, rascally head—why not split open at once, and have the job over—my feet, all this while, are as numb

and dead as a bailiff's conscience. Come, don't sit here any longer—up, fly about, set your old carcass in motion. What shall I do, where shall I go? ah, a thought strikes me—yes, I will rush straightway into the streets, and pull the very first nose that I encounter—no matter who may be its wearer—be he saint, savage, or sage, kinsman or stranger, citizen or alien—well, what then? why, of course, there will be a huge surprise—there will be objur-gations, cursings, and collarings, a fight—I shall be thrashed, no doubt, heartily, gloriously thrashed, most righteously, too. Well, while it will not fail to amuse and edify the neighbors and bystanders, why might it not also be of service to me? a service-able counter-irritant? it will soon bring this vile blood to the surface, I warrant me. Why not be peppered and bruised in that way, as well as be locked up between two rascally mustard plasters? 'tis only a shorter cut to the desired result. Yes, I verily believe that a pair of black eyes would be the very best thing in the world for me—to be sure, there is nothing cheerful or dignified about them—but what of that? anything, anything for relief—but suppose I should happen to stumble on Hyer—he'd soon make an end of me—one blow of his ponderous fist would send me whirling into king-

don come, in a twinkling—that *would* be a pleasant, creditable departure from this busy scene, wouldn't it? no, no, no—I had much better make for bed—but I can't sleep—I shall only kick, and toss, and scold, and make a fool of myself—oh, that I *could* sleep—oh, for a long, long sleep, sweeter than the prattle of Rosalind, deeper than the wisdom of Solomon—no, I may not have it—no such boon for me—that infernal scoundrel that went by just now, that grinning swindler, whose conscience ought to be kicking and pricking him continually, *he'll* sleep to night as sound as a roach, and I shall not close my eyes. I have a great mind to get drunk—no, I won't—that would a poor business, a wretched business. I should be a frightful loser by any such transaction—for every hour of feverish slumber, should I not have to pay at least four of cursed torment? My neighbor —— is more fortunate—he can turn his stomach into a demijohn, every night, with impunity—mine is a very different affair, a perfect sensitive plant, and be hanged to it—would I were well rid of it, and of all the rest of this confounded take-in of a body of mine—my soul is tired of such shabby lodgings—let her go, then; and as for this old nuisance of a body, away with it—toss it into the sea, chuck it into

Vesuvius, sell it to the doctors, or hand it over to the worms—who cares? Heigh-ho! what a life—what a life—what a life!

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STILL in the grumbling vein—still mourning over the loss of my studies, and my pleasures—my moral delinquencies and short-comings, somehow or other, don't seem to worry me so much. I take *them* quite coolly. I can hanker after the dainties of the epicure, the laurels of the scholar—I can get mad, because I may not extort the applauses, sway the hearts of my brethren, and, all this while, the great, the glorious, the only object in life worth living for, is within my grasp, and I do not even lift a finger towards securing it—true, I may not be vigorous, or rich, or powerful, or renowned—but oh, may I not be, if I will, kind, and forbearing, and forgiving, and charitable? I cannot take towns, or conquer languages, but I *can* subjugate this vile temper, can overthrow these villanous passions of mine. Yes, I have but to say the word, and I can win victories, and wear crowns, to which all the triumphs of Napoleon, all the diadems of Europe, are lustreless and valueless. But I will not



—it looks as if I never would—and so I shall go to my grave, not merely an invalid, and an ignoramus, but a poor, miserable sinner besides—fool, fool that I am. And yet, is your mere goodness worth having, after all? What signifies a kind heart, unaccompanied by any vigor of body or mind? praiseworthy intentions, with neither health, wealth, nor talent, to aid and abet them, and bring them to any practical account? who wants to be an amiable nobody? an exemplary cipher? to have a character so intrinsically feeble and insignificant, that it is of no manner of consequence to the world, whether it be in repair or in decay, in cloud or in sunshine. Such a spectacle, is it not almost as melancholy as to behold brilliant talents enlisted in the service of vice? nay, far more so; for there is always some hope of reclaiming the one, but what under Heaven can ever be made out of the other?—a good-natured imbecile, forsooth. If that's the part I have got to play all my life, I'd rather leave the stage at once; to be a poor, silly cripple, indeed; not worth the crutches that hold me up; too feeble to defend myself; too stupid to contribute one solitary item to the comfort or happiness of those about me; a mere cumberer of the earth; can it be that I am fast getting into that condition? if so, let me die, die, die,

forthwith and have done with it. I ask again, what is mere kindliness of disposition worth, unless it be allied with quick wits, sound nerves, untiring energies? then I can do something with it; can bring it to market; can make it serviceable to my brethren and myself—on such terms, the game of life is worth playing; the voyage worth pursuing; otherwise I am for making for the very first port. But is this a sound view of the matter? Is it not, rather, the language of an impatient, rebellious spirit? Besides, *can* there be any goodness, without intelligence?—how unreasonable, how absurd to talk in this style; *mere* goodness, forsooth? why, what does the very idea imply, but quick perceptions, warm passions, a hard struggle, a glorious victory? What has imbecility to do with it?—’tis an abuse of language to associate them—and as to poverty and sickness, do you mean to say that *they* take from the dignity and value of virtue?—charming doctrine, to be sure. What, the very things of all others, that most show off its lustre, its divine beauty and preciousness? No, no; ’tis mere false pride, and sickly ambition that make me feel and talk thus. This is not the language of the beatitudes; this is not the Christian’s view of life; these, obscure, passive virtues, that I neglect, nay, shrink

from, why they are the very ones that Christianity most exalts, most insists upon; 'tis they that form the crowning glory of the character of its Founder; sneer not at them, then, as only fit for cell and cloister, and the chamber of the sick; as if more truly heroic deeds and words were not daily done and uttered, in these same sick chambers, than battle-fields have ever witnessed. Ah! yes; to be devout and patient and unmurmuring and forbearing and unselfish; to stifle one's resentments, to withhold words of complaint and reproach, to be ever ready with words of love and kindness, these are the real virtues after all—worth more, far more, than the active, showy ones that figure and bustle about camps and courts—these you are sure of; the others are always more or less mixed up with selfishness and ambition; these are pure, sincere, precious; 'tis these that make woman lovely; these that God and holy angels delight to look upon; and oh, the reward that they bring with them—such inward peace, such sweet serenity of mind; shall I ever know it, feel it?—what are the applauses of the mob, alongside such a treasure as this? Who would be ass enough to exchange a quiet, unreproving conscience, for all the plate that has been presented, all the resolutions that have been voted, all the

medals and banners and titles and pensions that have been decreed, all the blasts that have been blown on Fame's trumpet, from the Deluge down? And if I will, I may practise these virtues, may enjoy these rewards—who may not?—what corner of earth so obscure that they may not be found there? Who so poor, so lowly, so sickly, so ignorant, that he can escape these duties, can be deprived of these privileges? And that I should wish to turn my back upon them; should wish to sneak out of life, before my time; should be for throwing up my part, in a pet, because it does not suit my notions, when I might make so much of it if I chose; should wilfully forego such glorious opportunities of being and doing good, and of setting a good example to those about me. Oh, am I *not* a fool, fool, fool?—out upon such accursed infatuation! I shall pay for it most bitterly, most righteously, hereafter; my eyes will be opened, then. I shall find, to my cost, how utterly I have misconstrued, how abominably I have perverted God's gift of life; wake up, man, wake up; a truce to this indecent grumbling, this disgraceful listlessness; come, stir your stumps; don't fret over the past, but make the most of what remains; turn it to some account, put it to some worthy use; waste no more breath in words, but up and act, act, act!

STUMBLED upon —— again, to-day; he was in the same bitter, railing vein, as when I saw him last; worse, if anything; what set him going more particularly, was the recent State Election, and its disgusting result, as he called it—"I have no patience," said he, "with the people; how *could* they make such perfect asses of themselves?—the idea of making that bag of wind, that noisy, shallow demagogue, Muggins, Governor, and of passing by that glorious old trump of a statesman and patriot, Scroggins; it is too bad; but isn't it always so? Isn't every popular election a monument of popular folly? *Won't* it be, so long as this infernal humbug of universal suffrage prevails? And such a bench of Judges as they have put in—a precious set of fellows, to be sure. Who are they? Who knows them? Youngsters, adventurers—not a white head among them; the idea of thrusting aside age, learning, wisdom, in favor of a mere parcel of politicians—isn't it atrocious? What right have they to mix up Justice with Politics in this style? What business have the expounders of the Law to go about mounting the stump, turning slang-whangers, bespattering each other with all the filthy epithets that are engendered in pot-houses? We shall catch it, we shall catch it, depend upon it, for

tempting Providence in this way ; we may blunder along for a while, but the day of retribution will come ; the whirlwind *will* be reaped at last ; and a terrible tornado it will be, too ; we are dashing along, it seems to me even now, at a frightful rate on the Road to Ruin, ruin ruin"—(I couldn't agree with him, either as to the Election or as to the prospect ahead ; on the contrary, I see much to admire in the successful Muggins, both as man and magistrate ; and as to the newly elected Judges, he must be strangely ignorant, or furiously partisan, who does not recognize much that is respectable alike in worth and learning among them ; but I held my peace, and so he rattled on)—“But it's all of a piece ; our political follies are no greater than our social ; we seem to delight in making ninnies of ourselves in every way ; there never *was* such a crop of humbugs in the world, as now—Socialism, Mesmerism, Millerism, Mormonism, Bloomerism—not a week without some vile quackery or other ; every lying charlatan that comes along, with sound lungs and a face of brass to back him, is sure of us—is sure of his thousands of victims, and their dollars—we seem determined to turn our backs upon calm wisdom and good sense, in all the departments of life—we are crazy after novelties, mysteries, mon-

strosities of all kinds, and have no relish, either for the patient investigation, or modest, simple exhibition of Truth—our tastes are all perverted, too; we have no real, bona fide love of the beautiful in Nature or in Art; rattling over the face of the earth as we do in our railroad cars, we scarce condescend to raise our eyes from our newspapers to behold the most exquisite scenery—nay, most of us would take far more pleasure in seeing a train of those same cars go dashing by, and in listening to the screams of the locomotive, than they would in watching the flight of the eagle, or in hearing the music of the nightingale; as to any quiet, deliberate, rational enjoyment of anything, be it a dinner, or a book, or a picture, or a waterfall, it seems quite out of date; we go for bustle, hurry, rush, gross animal excitements; we have no time to linger over the pure, tranquil beauty that shines through the works of Raphael, but the gaudy, extravagant pictures of “Young France,” with their false sentiment and their perpetual appeals to the appetites, these we understand—these we buy up with eagerness—you’ll find them in every barber’s shop and bar-room in the land. So with books,—who cares, now-a-days, for the elaborate beauty of Pope, the quiet sentiment of Goldsmith? why a man who would venture to quote them, would be voted a

bore, a slow coach, a perfect antediluvian; no girl would have him; far, far safer for him, in a matrimonial point of view, to let off a sky-rocket from Carlyle or Emerson, or pour forth a misty strain from the divinely incomprehensible Tennyson—anything, anything but good strong sense, conveyed in clear, flowing diction. That's quite out of fashion. Abominable perversion, to be sure; 'tis like preferring a piece of sparkling, sputtering fireworks to a lovely golden sunset—but so it is; noise, fury, glare, mystery, are the order of the day. Who ever thinks, now-a-days, of reading a good, old-fashioned, hearty, natural, sound English novel, like Tom Jones or Joseph Andrews? We have no stomachs for any such wholesome fare as that—but the suspicious, high seasoned dishes served up by a Sue, or a Dumas, we can all bolt them down with most frightful avidity. What millions and millions of those filthy, fiery French novels are continually circulating through the country; every book-stall, steamboat, rail car, is filled with them—they are driving all the sound, generous literature of our forefathers off the course. Scott himself will soon go by the board, at this rate. What precious mental food for the rising generation; it is really horrible to think of the effect that *must* be produced by



all this poisonous trash. Is it not the same in music, too? We have no patience now for the classic compositions of Handel or Haydn—we can hardly sit still under Mozart. Oh no, Verdi and his kettle drums, for our money; an opera, to be palatable now-a-days, must have at least half a dozen murders and incests, and such like stimulants in it; the orchestra can't be too strong, or fast, or furious; excitement, excitement, that's what we want—a perpetual stretching of the nerves, an eternal keeping up of the steam; anything like a slow movement is intolerable to us, be it in a steamboat or a fiddle-bow; no matter where we may be, no matter what the scenery may be around us—Jersey Flats or Vale of Tempe, 'tis all one—nothing less than a two-forty nag, or mile-a-minute locomotive, will serve our turn. The ocean itself, we only think of it as a race-course for steamers; hurry, hurry hurry, that's the motto of the age; one can hardly find time now-a-days to chew his food, or pick his teeth, or pronounce his words. It is as much as a man's character is worth to be seen walking deliberately, or looking in at a shop window—he is forthwith pronounced an idler, a vagabond, one who is shirking his duties to society; he himself feels guilty, feels as if the police had their eyes upon him. Pah!

it's disgusting to think of the tumultuous, the absurd lives that most of us are leading; what are they but one eternal race with time, one perpetual chase after news and business—our brains in a constant whirl—our whole faculties given up to the mere outside, material interests and excitements around us. There is no dignity, or tranquillity, or depth, or heart in them. Yes, we are fast becoming as fussy, and fidgety, and noisy, and superficial, and conceited a set of fellows as ever made a planet uncomfortable. Brag and crow as much as we will, we are not half so sensible, we don't enjoy life half so much, as our forefathers did—and yet we talk of them as if they were mere babies alongside of us; as if our century were worth all its predecessors put together—humbug, humbug! I shall of course be called a fool and slanderer for saying so, and yet I *do* say, that I don't believe there is one whit more genuine worth, wit, wisdom, on earth, to-day, than there was in the age of Pericles. The Athenians certainly *did* behave very abominably, when they gave Aristides his walking ticket; but did we men of the Empire city behave much better, during the late election? Did we show any more good sense in the choice of our rulers, or good temper in our conduct at the polls? I very much doubt whether

any exercise of the elective franchise at Rome or Athens was ever productive of one half the amount of lying and bribery, of bloody noses and cracked crowns, that disgraced our metropolis the other day. No—men are just the same miserable old sixpences, the world is just the same shabby old concern now as it ever was; where *are* all these boasted improvements? I can't see them; I can't discover a single corner of the earth in a really happy, healthy condition. Look at Europe—what a scene of uproar, confusion, panic, wretchedness—what frightful uncertainty as to the future; that *some* terrible collision is to come off soon, who can doubt? And even if Liberty *should* carry the day, can she keep it? No, they are not fit for Liberty, not capable of self-government, not a nation of them all. Is there anything in Asia that looks like Progress? Has mind marched a single inch forward, in Africa, since creation morning? How many of the islands of the earth are the abodes of peaceful, loving Christian men? let a new one heave in sight to-morrow, and what a scrabbling and squabbling there will be about it among the nations—will they not all be ready, eager to cut each other's throats for the sake of its few paltry acres? Our South American brethren, are they dwelling to-

gether in unity, or has it been a perfect Kilkenny cat business with them from the beginning? Our own apparent prosperity, is it of the right sort? Will it last? Are there no breakers ahead? Who does not see that it will take all our eyes, and wits, and forbearance to keep this union of ours from splitting to pieces? What ground is there then for this bragging and self-glorifying, that we hear so much of? We have far more reason to be ashamed of ourselves, and to be filled with apprehensions. Ah, the more one thinks of what life really is, thinks of the frightful preponderance there is, and ever has been in the world, of ignorance, folly, wickedness, over their opposites, the more sickened and disgusted one becomes with it all—pah! what a set, what a set—such a planet is a perfect disgrace to the system—only look at it a minute—take this very town of ours, which we are all so fond of crowing about—of the millions of transactions of all kinds which are going on in it, this very hour, how many are really creditable to the parties concerned? Of the thousands of dinners that are being cooked, how many are in the hands of artists, how many are entrusted to abominable bunglers? Is it not frightful to think of the awful quantity of greasy soup, sour bread, rancid butter, bullet-like

peas, waxy potatoes, tough fowls, over-roasted joints, that will this day be hurried down the throats of our fellow-citizens? Of the individuals, too, who are about to disintegrate those same fowls and joints, how many will be cool, clear-headed carvers, how many will be furious hackers, manglers, spatterers? Of the servants in waiting, how many will be light-footed, wide awake, respectful; how many noisy, clumsy, dish-breaking whelps? Of the hundreds of pianos that are being thumped upon, how many are sources of pleasure, how many are positive nuisances to the neighborhood? Of the hundreds of doctors who are circulating about the streets in their gigs, how many are benefiting their patients, how many the undertakers? Of the advocates who are blazing away in our courts, how many are doing justice to their clients, or edifying their hearers? Is it not disgusting to think of the amount of cloudy logic, stale rhetoric, indecent personalities, brow-beating of witnesses, humbugging of juries, teasing of judges, that every day disgraces our halls of justice? But why go into detail? Take any walk of life you please, from the sacred desk down to the bench of the boot-black, and will you not find it the same? How little, little that will bear analysis—be it in matters of duty or of

pleasure, of business or amusement, still, still the same. Why, take the mere games of chess, or whist, or billiards, that will be played about town, before another sun rises, for every ten that will be respectable exhibitions of skill or judgment, will there not be full a hundred that will be disgraceful failures, that would fairly turn the stomach of a Hoyle or Phillidor, if compelled to look on?" Here we parted company—otherwise, no doubt, he would have gone on in the same strain till now, pouring forth his invectives, bespattering everybody and everything that came in his way—seeing nothing in heaven above or earth beneath that was pleasant, or bright, or encouraging—so it seems to be with him always—one perpetual volley of scorn and sarcasm—and yet is there not some truth, some force, mixed up with all this extravagance? Certainly there is—there is something quaint and picturesque, too, in his mode of expressing himself. If he is always unjust and severe, 'tis but fair to admit that he is often sprightly and entertaining in his remarks. But is this the spirit in which to handle such themes? this vein of mingled vanity and bitterness? Would a man who really grieved over the follies and errors of his brethren, have let off such a tirade as this? It sounds far more like the

talk of one who loves to hear the sound of his own voice, who tries to say strong things, who is amusing his fancy, and sharpening his wit at the expense of those about him—far more like the language of a fastidious, impatient, selfish nature, than of true charity, true zeal for the welfare of one's fellows. Why make this elaborate parade of human weaknesses? why dwell with such suspicious gusto on the details of all this filth that surrounds you? Would a genuine reformer talk in this style? No, indeed—he would be far more disposed to forbearance, far more disposed to weep than to sneer. *He* a reformer, forsooth—oh no—he is quite too fond of his comfort for that—quite too warmly attached to his pipe and his pot, to embark upon any such rugged, uninviting enterprise as that—he can sit at his ease in his chair, and rail at the crowd as it passes, but as to getting up, and doing good, and helping mend matters, not he, indeed—it is altogether pleasanter to fire off one's witticisms at the world's vices and follies, before an applauding audience, isn't it, than quietly, patiently, faithfully to exert one's self towards removing them—but which is the more respectable, decent, manly course? Come, man, get up, then—abandon this inglorious ease, lay aside that dainty meerschaum, let it go for

a few days, just by way of experiment—never mind opening that bottle—let the wine alone—neither you nor the wine will be any the worse for it a week hence. Cultivate the acquaintance of the Croton for a day or two—'twill be a pleasant novelty for the stomach. Come, let's go take a walk—'twill do us good—not in the gay, handsome parts of the town, though—let's go see how the poor folks live—come. Ah! where are we? strange streets, these—not very clean ones, either. What an atmosphere—very different from that of the Fifth Avenue or Union Place, isn't it? Never mind—don't turn back—don't let your nose run away at the first assault—'twill be a good lesson for it, such a stench as this—we shall relish all the more, too, the pure air and sweet roses at home—come ahead. Ah, worse and worse—a suspicious-looking neighborhood this—don't be alarmed, though—there are our friends with the stars—we are safe enough; to be sure, it might be advisable to take off those dainty lemon-colored gloves of yours—they *might* provoke an unpleasant strain of remark in these parts. Now come on—ah, viler and viler—what a hole—what crumbling, dilapidated houses, what ragged, abandoned-looking inmates. Whew! what a steam is rising from these abominable streets.



Surely this must be the Five Points—what else should it be, but that famous pit of iniquity, the sink of the earth, the headquarters of filth and rascality and wretchedness. Ah, you're for getting off, I see, as fast as possible—you have no notion of risking your precious limbs and pockets in such a den as this; it isn't strange; we *are* amongst a set of horrible wretches, to be sure. What, you shrink from them; you are unwilling to speak to, even to look at these poor devils? for shame, man! you, who are so fond of railing at the vices and miseries of the world, are yet afraid to look them fairly in the face, are for beating an inglorious retreat, the moment that you are confronted with the disgusting reality—stop, man, stop—now that we *are* here, let's look into this matter—let's see with our own eyes what this terrible place is made of—terrible, indeed—heavens, what a crew!—what a nest of thieves, drunkards, strumpets, vagabonds of all colors and sizes—see that group of half-naked, dirty brats—poor things, what a place for *them*—what a school—precious lessons are they learning—no prayers, no hymns, do *they* ever hear, nothing but cursings and railings and foul, beastly words—such faces as one sees here—leering, loathsome wretches, there is nothing in Hogarth half so sickening, so appalling—no

wonder one shudders, and is for hurrying away from them. And yet, we ought to be here, we ought to come, and realize, and take to heart these sad, dismal scenes—yes, man, you, to whom God has given so many good things, on whom he has so freely bestowed health, and means, and leisure, where could you better expend them, than here? What an opening, what a field of labor for the philanthropist is this. Wouldn't it be glorious now to revolutionize this spot, to replace these vile haunts with comely dwellings, to let in the pure breath of heaven amongst these pestilent streets and alleys, to help restore to order and decency these poor souls and bodies of these degraded brethren and sisters of ours? Come, let's try the experiment—what nobler enterprise could be devised for human wits? Come, throw aside your luxuries, for a while—your fine books and pictures, and dainties—let me, too, forget my paltry aches, and idle grumblings, and let us go forth, and see what we can do in this matter—'twill come hard at first, to be sure—'twill be a terribly repulsive, discouraging undertaking, but who knows how it may end? *Is* it so visionary a thing, after all? Why, even *this* hole is not so black as it appears—even here, we may stumble upon an occasional pleasant smile, an ingenuous expres-

sion—may meet with good impulses, that only require a kindly culture, to ripen into positive worth—quick wits, that, properly trained, might be made the means of usefulness and honor—yes, even in this vile dunghill, there may be pearls worth hunting up—let's set about it, then—let's spend a month that way, if it be only for the novelty of the thing—we shall feel all the better for it, I dare say—shall discover a new meaning, a new relish in life—there will be less sneering and snarling in our conversation, I warrant you—less fretfulness and fastidiousness in our tempers—you smile, and seem to wonder whether I'm awake, or dreaming—*I am* awake, I'm in earnest—come, let's devote the rest of our lives to these employments—we shall be rewarded, most handsomely rewarded, for it—we shall be respected, respectable men; people will be proud to take off their hats to us—glad to grasp us by the hand—good men shall sing our praises—poets shall pen our epitaphs—sculptors shall send us down, with all the honors, to posterity. Oh, it must be delightful to have conscience on one's side, quietly endorsing all one's transactions—delightful to feel for one's self, and not merely take it on hearsay, that pleasure and duty *may* jog cozily along together on the same road; that's the only receipt,

after all, for a quiet life, for a peaceful exit—then we shall have the approving smiles of the angels, shall be received as welcome guests, as worthy citizens of heaven .

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AND so my dear old friend ——— has gone to his long home, at last—"after life's fitful fever, he sleeps well." It was indeed a fitful fever, with him—unluckiest of all unlucky wights. And yet, fortune did not inflict her heaviest, most stunning blows upon him—she neither robbed him of health, or means, or friends, or reputation—but she seemed to take pleasure in annoying him in ten thousand little paltry ways—teazing, badgering, and worrying him out of all comfort and patience. Indeed, I don't know that I ever saw him comfortable for five consecutive minutes—something or other was for ever fretting and distressing him—his boots, were always pinching him, or his hat was chafing his forehead, or his coat was cutting him to the quick, or he had a tickling in his throat, or a bleeding at the nose, or a spark in his eyes, or a singing in his ears, or some infernal thing, or other, that kept continually reminding him what a poor mis-

erable mortal he was—so was it at all times and in all places—at home, he had no comfort—his wife was always sick, or his servants were drunk—his chimney was all smoke and no blaze—his bell-pull was broken—his beef was cold—his wine was warm—everything seemed to go wrong—at church, he could not enjoy Divine Worship—*his* pew was always the first to be pounced upon by intrusive strangers—confound them, what right have people to trespass on one's property, in this way? I should as soon think of jumping into a man's carriage, unasked—he was right in getting vexed about it. The same on C'hange—'twas his luck, invariably, to be a bull when he ought to have been a bear, a bear when he ought to have been a bull. Did a new set of counterfeit notes make its appearance in the community? He, of course, was sure to be amongst the first and heaviest recipients—the same in his purchases—if he took a bill and receipt, he could never lay his hands upon it, and so was continually squabbling with insolent tradesmen. The only lottery ticket he ever bought, that drew anything, happened to be the very one that he was induced to part with, to a friend—his luck, his luck—poor fellow, he seemed to be eternally called upon to do jury duty, to be served with a perpetual

succession of subpoenas—he was always in hot water about his taxes and his militia fines—not a moment's peace or quiet could he get out of life—his very watch seemed to conspire against him, and to love to stop, at the very time when he most depended upon its going—how many times, in consequence, has he been left behind by steamboats—how many trains of cars have given him the slip, to his unqualified disgust, and the equally unqualified delight of a set of jeering porters and loafers—he was for ever running against fresh paint, getting spattered by omnibuses, tripped up by dogs or apple-parings, having umbrellas poked in his eyes—more than once, has he been, most innocently too, involved in a street fight, and his poor head has taken a shower of blows intended for other noddles—so fared he always—if he went to the theatre, there was sure to be an apology for the very performer whom he had set his heart upon seeing. Oh Lord—I shall never forget that night he was collared and carried out of the stage box, at the old Park, from his most unfortunate resemblance, as it turned out afterwards, to a notorious counterfeiter of the day—collared just as he was comfortably settling himself in a most eligible seat, for which he had paid some four hundred per cent. premium, that

very morning; and no wonder—'twas a great occasion—no less than Fanny Kemble's first appearance in America. Who that witnessed, can ever forget that glorious, delicious personation of Juliet? Is it strange, that ——— could never allude to that affair, without using language, strong even unto blasphemy? Poor soul, his last sickness, they say, was quite too much in keeping with the whole tenor of his life—it seems that the stupid old fool of a nurse that waited upon him, *would* persist in mistaking tonics for cathartics, and cathartics for tonics, till the patient was really cheated and worried out of existence, in the most unseemly, disgraceful manner—and when, at last, the breath was out of his body, even then, it seemed as if Fortune were determined to have one more malicious grin at his expense—for while they were rendering the last sad offices to his remains, the hearse that was conveying them to their final resting-place, most perversely, parted company with one of its wheels—this frightened the horses, who began to cut up a variety of most unseasonable capers, to the great annoyance of the mourners and friends, and the ill-smothered merriment of the heartless bystanders. Is it to be wondered at, that a man thus vexed, and irritated, and pestered, should occasionally have

lost heart and patience? "Better far," he would say, "to be fairly knocked down, and trampled upon by Fortune—there would be something respectable in that, something dignified, something that might lay claim to the sympathies of one's fellow-men. But to be made a perfect ass, and a butt of, to be the mere theme of her Ladyship's laughter, 'twas more than mortal man could bear." Is it strange, that he should get angry, and fall to cursing his unlucky stars—and at times that he should question the ways of Providence, and think it hard that the great Creator, who sees "alike the hero perish, and the sparrow fall," should permit the life of any creature of his thus to be turned into a nuisance and a torment? Well, well, well—peace be with thee, old friend. I trust that thou art now having a quiet time of it, art enjoying a sweet, dreamless sleep, and that when thou awakest, thou wilt enter upon a scene of pleasing duties, of tranquil enjoyments, unvexed by the thousand annoyances, unvisited by the "thousand natural pangs that flesh is heir to."

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MY good genius took me to the theatre last



night, to see Richard the Third—ah, what an entertainment! I wouldn't have missed it for a good many bushels of gold dust. Never was the usurper in higher health and spirits—never before have I seen one half the amount of exercise taken in the part—such a knocking together of gloves, such a clatter of boots! How he did fly about, to be sure. What infernal faces he kept making up—what an outlay of lungs—what a perpetual making of points, from the very first line of the soliloquy, up to the great final fight. Such a fight, too—there seemed to be no end to it. The tyrant seemed determined not to give up the ghost, come what would—punch, punch, punch, went Richmond's blade, through and through him, at least a score of times; still he kept at it, as brisk as a bee, as full of sound and fury as ever, to the evident surprise and disgust of his antagonist, and to the great edification of an intensely excited pit—when he was fairly quieted at last, after a world of kicking, and floundering, and gasping, then the feelings of the audience were poured forth in such a mingled torrent of yells and cheers, as young and ardent Democratic Republicans alone know how to give—'twas a glorious tribute to genius—one hardly knew which to admire most, the performance itself, or

this cordial, beautiful recognition of its merits. If tradition speak truth, how very flat and stupid, in comparison, must Garrick and Henderson have been in this part—how tame and inefficient the versions of Cooke and Kean—my *neighbor* didn't think so, though—it was clear that this superb piece of acting was completely thrown away upon him—but then he was an Englishman—a bilious, bigoted Englishman—confound him, in some of the most thrilling passages, I overheard him muttering to himself, what an infernal humbug—and when the curtain dropped at the close, he had the audacity to pronounce aloud the words atrocious swindle, and then rushed out of the box, slamming the door violently after him. Ah dear, such is the force of vile, vile prejudice—the conceited old wretch—as if he had ever heard anything half so fine, at Drury Lane, or Covent Garden, either. And yet, to be candid, it must be confessed that the play was not so judiciously cast throughout, as it might have been. For instance, was it altogether the thing, to put those two fat, red-faced women, each weighing her two hundred and fifty pounds, in the parts of Lady Anne and Queen Elizabeth? Was there anything regal or interesting in their appearance or movements? Again, were those two dirty,

shabbily dressed brats, that spoke so through their noses, and made such frightful havoc with the text, anything like adequate representatives of the lovely young princes? Was it in keeping with the character of the timid, amiable, philosophizing King Henry, to be so frightfully over the bay as he was?—so much so, indeed, that he could hardly stand up to be stabbed by the tyrant? Wasn't it rather cruel, too, in the manager, to thrust that poor fellow, who was evidently laboring with a severe touch of bronchitis, into the arduous part of Buckingham? there were little slips, moreover, in the matters of scenery and costume, that ought not to have been made, in an establishment of such princely resources. What right had Richard to woo Lady Anne, in St. Mark's Place, Venice? Why did Richmond address those encouraging remarks to his troops, in a pass in the Tyrol? and, above all, what business had the American flag to wave over the field of Bosworth? Why should the usurper have fellows in his pay, who, by all the laws of dress, ought to have been at Salamis, or Marathon? And why did that individual in the cocked hat and drab breeches perform such feats of valor on the Lancasterian side? Hang him, he was at least four centuries before his time—he ought to have been

earning those laurels at Saratoga, or at Bennington. But I am hypercritical, perhaps—after all, these were mere spots upon the sun—the glorious, the magnificent, the intensely intellectual Richard atoned for them all, an hundred-fold. It is, indeed, an epoch in one's life, the witnessing such a performance. 'Twas something, doubtless, to have seen a Siddons, or a Kemble, in *Macbeth*—to have heard the pleasant voice, the merry laugh of Mrs. Jordan, in *Rosalind*—to have seen the *School for Scandal*, or *Twelfth Night*, cast as Lamb describes them—but oh, how they would have all failed and faded into insignificance, before the superb demonstration of last night! Why couldn't Lamb have been present, and Coleridge, and Manning, and Hazlitt, and the rest of them? Poor fellows, they lived a half a century too soon. Ah well, let me be grateful, profoundly, lastingly grateful for this unprecedented dramatic treat.

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OF all the polite and amiable men that have made their bows, or waved their beavers, since the Flood, my excellent friend —— certainly bears the bell. I speak not of mere skin-deep politeness,

conventional civility—oh, no; his is a thorough-going, bona fide, unremitting courtesy—a suavity springing from the heart, and pervading and animating every muscle and bone of his body. Let him that doubts but behold him, as he makes his entrée in a drawing-room, and above all, observe him while he is discharging the arduous duties of New Year's day—what a thorough dedication of the whole man is here to the great task before him; what profusion of compliments does he keep pouring forth—what frequent, earnest, hearty handshakings for his intimate friends; what effective and eloquent bows for the rest. What deep duckings and divings of the upper portions—what nimbleness and suppleness in the leg department—yes, a sweep of full ninety degrees, in that last congé. Surely this man means something—this is no joke, but a veritable labor of love. At times, indeed, to say truth, my friend's politeness is almost a source of annoyance to those about him. I have known him, for instance, under the influence of this feeling, perform, in the aisle of a church, a series of picturesque and animated evolutions, quite as ill-timed as they were well meant, and which have sadly discomposed the nerves of the more sophisticated occupants of the adjoining pews. At other times it is merely lu-

dicrous. I happened to be with him in the street the other day, when a drove of hogs passed by. Now, — is so amiably disposed towards all God's creatures, that this feeling, aided and abetted by the courteous practices of near half a century, absolutely impelled him to take off his hat to them. Soon after this occurrence, a most shabby and worthless-looking terrier made his appearance, and would persist in getting in —'s way, once or twice nearly tripping him up. Any other man, under such circumstances, would have said very promptly, Get out, with a kick probably, and possibly with some disrespectful allusion to the terrier's mother. All that could be forced out of — was a gentle wave of the hand, and "Make room, if you please." I even fancied once that I saw him actually bowing to a roast turkey, just before proceeding to carve it—absurd as it appeared, I nevertheless interpreted it into a sort of apology to the great family of turkeys, for the apparent heartlessness and cruelty of the transaction—in the same spirit he would no doubt ask pardon of a rose-bush for robbing it of its flowers; nay, of a very mosquito, for injuring it while in the very act of biting him—so deep, so abiding is the kindness of this man's heart. Thus has it been with him, they say, from the be-

ginning ; his nurses are reported to have said that he was the best infant that ever drew breath—that when weaning time came, he manifested a spirit of resignation most creditable to him—that amidst all the terrors of teething, he behaved beautifully. His school-mistresses and masters all agreed in representing him as the quietest, most docile pupil they ever had ; that the birch and the ferule, that were plied so continually and so vigorously all around him, never alighted on his innocent little person ; they are said to have added, that they did not believe he had ever murdered a fly, or pelted a frog, in the whole course of his boyish career. And yet there are those who, incapable of comprehending so rare a goodness, have utterly misinterpreted these manifestations of it, and have even gone so far as to insinuate that my old friend is somewhat out of his head, which they most absurdly attribute to his having been crossed in love some years since—others have impudently thrown out the idea, that there have *always* been a good many vacant apartments in his attic, while a third class do not scruple to avow that they believe him to be a great rogue at bottom ; taking it for granted, that he indemnifies himself for all this outlay of civility in public, by all kinds of secret meannesses and ras-

calities. Abominable, atrocious libels these, alike upon his head and heart. He is as intelligent and sensible as he is honest and warm-hearted; he is indeed of the excellent of the earth; God keep him long upon it; we can't spare such a delightful old neighbor and peace-maker; there are quite too few of them in this brawling, wrangling world of ours. Yes, old friend, *sero in cælum redeas*. And when thou takest thy departure, may I be graciously permitted to accompany thee. I would fain be by, when thou presentest thyself for admission at the celestial gate. What a profusion of bows, salutations, and acknowledgments wilt thou bestow on holy Peter. I greatly fear that the heavenly Janitor, if he retain any portion of the impulsive temperament that he had here below, will lose patience and exclaim, "Come in, friend, come in; have done with all those flourishes and fine speeches, and enter, enter freely." And then with what a pleasant smile wilt thou greet thy old friends and kinsfolk; with what profound respect, with what deep sense of the honor conferred, wilt thou make thy bow of introduction to the old prophets, and patriarchs, and all the other notabilities of the Holy City. But I dare not dwell upon anticipations so delightful, and so must bid thee adieu for awhile, with my humble, but most hearty God bless thee!



I FEEL decidedly better this bright, beautiful autumnal day—such a day—too good for us poor invalids—we can't enjoy it—how completely is such a treasure thrown away, too, on your men of business, your politicians, your sensualists—the poets and the painters, *they* can comprehend it, can appreciate it, can reproduce it with their glorious pens and pencils—yes, this day, doth it not live and glow, in all its brilliant beauty, in the matchless pictures of Cole, in the exquisite poems of Bryant? Alas, the artist's version must soon fade and moulder away, while the poet's will live for ever—will it not be so?—will not that matchless sonnet to October last so long as earth lasts, and its hours, and its seasons?—surely, surely it will. Let me read it again—if I can't enjoy the original as I would like, let me at least make the most of this beautiful copy—true, I have not health, strength, nerve, capacity enough, to hunt up and explore for myself all these hidden beauties and meanings in nature, but I *can* relish these charming descriptions; can avail myself of the labors of this gifted translator, this wise and kindly interpreter; let me be thankful for such a privilege.

How lively the street seems, this morning. Ah, there goes ——, smiling, cozy, placid as ever—

*he's* in no hurry, evidently. Did that man *ever* run? I doubt it; I doubt if the smartest shower that ever fell, could force him into a trot; you can't *get* rapid motion out of him; you can't fluster him, either, or discompose those nerves of his, for the life of you; I don't believe the great day of reckoning itself could throw him into much of a flutter; and yet, how dare he take things so coolly? A man, at his time of life, a rational, accountable, sinful man, how dare he manifest such indifference about his spiritual welfare? A man, too, who has such numerous and heavy creditors all over town, what right has he to amble along in this tranquil, pleasant sort of style? He looks, don't he, as if he was worrying himself about his sins, or his debts, either; as if he cared the toss of a farthing, how matters stood with him, either on the books of his brethren here below, or on those of the recording angel above? not he; oh, no, present comfort, present enjoyment, that's his motto; he means to have an agreeable day of it, come what will; he will, probably, spend the morning cracking jokes, smoking his friends' segars, beating them at billiards; if his wine be well-iced at dinner, and in good condition, what cares he whether it be paid for or not? You'll be sure to find him at the opera to-night, in the very best,

snuggest seat in the house; no man there will enjoy more the pure tenor of Salvi, or the winning ways of Bosio; to be sure, he'll have no right to be there; he ought to be living humbly, frugally; he ought to be hard at work in some honest calling—striving to reduce that mountain of debt, instead of secretly enjoying its extent and elevation, but he won't; he will, in theory, indeed, cheerfully recognize the propriety of punctuality and honesty; will even express himself, on these subjects, as neatly and pithily as the Hon. Joseph Surface ever did. But there it ends—the scamp—the scoundrel. And yet, I fear, I am not half so angry with him as a truly exemplary man would be; to say truth, I fear I am, this minute, rather envying him his high health and his good spirits, than grieving over his delinquencies, or feeling any real alarm about his prospects hereafter. Ah, dear, this reminds me of my whimsical neighbor ———, and of his queer views on this same subject of indebtedness. 'Twas only yesterday that I heard him air his feelings on this delicate point. I happened to run against him in the street; I saw at once that he was in a high state of excitement about something. I could not help asking him what the matter was. “Ah,” said he, drawing a long breath, “I ought to be

ashamed of it, I suppose, but the truth is, I have just been paying a heavy grocer's bill, and it goes to my very soul; I cannot get over it; I feel as if I had been making a fool of myself; I might, just as well as not, have kept the man out of his money for another month; he evidently did not expect it. Confound the fellow! I could see by the quiet grin with which he received the money, and counted it over, that he was having a hearty laugh within, at my expense. Yes, I feel quite angry with myself; I could almost blaspheme about it; I could kick the fellow with a right good will; I should like to see a dog flying at him, this moment, or a pugilist damaging his ugly frontispiece. Ah, this is wrong, is downright criminal in me; I know it—I confess it—still I feel so. And what aggravates the matter, my dear fellow, I was ass enough to pay the man in gold, hard, glittering gold; yes, a whole score of bright, new half-eagles. Oh, how *could* I have been such a fool? Why not have waited a while, and then have discharged this cursed obligation by means of some old, ragged, filthy bank-note, with the signatures half eaten away. And if there *had* been a slight cloud of suspicion hanging over the credit of the institution, why, all the better—*then*, perhaps I might have felt

differently; I might have been comparatively cheerful; as it is, I feel small, cheap, wretched.”—  
“But, my dear friend,” said I, “tell me—was not the debt a fairly contracted one?” “Certainly,” said he. “Were not the articles good?” “Excellent.” “The prices reasonable?” “They were.” “Have you not had, then, a fair substantial *pro quo*?” “I have.” “Why then begrudge this worthy man his *quid*? Why take the matter so to heart? You have but done your duty; but obeyed the authoritative voice of conscience; take comfort then—hold up your head—thump your breast—take a manly stride or two—appeal cheerfully and confidently to the *mens conscia recti*. How do you feel *now*?” “Cheap as ever,” he replied; “yes, it would be all folly and humbug for me to pretend that it were not so. Had I actually been doing wrong, I should not have felt half so bad. But why is this, my friend? *Am* I so much worse than my neighbors? Oh, *am* I the most depraved of my race, when I confess to you, that if I had squandered this very identical amount on a champagne frolic, or had I melted it down into a bracelet for some silly girl, I should have been better satisfied; or had I given it to the cause of the widow and the orphan, or to some missionary enterprise, I might

at least have derived comfort from the publication of the gift; as it is, you see how I feel. Yes, scoundrel that I am, I avow to you, that I take far more pleasure in the indulgence of an appetite or a sentiment, or in the gratification of a paltry vanity, than I do in the faithful discharge of an humble duty. Is not this a frightful state of things? What am I to do? Perhaps the perusal of some sound treatise on the law of debtor and creditor might do me good, might compose me, might restore the balance of my mind. Have you such a work? If so, pray send it to me. Meanwhile, I'll hurry home, and see if a chapter or two from the good book may not be of benefit to me." And off he went; no doubt he recovered himself long before he got home; all he wanted was an opportunity of venting his whims. I dare say, he was rattling away, the very next minute, about something widely different, but in the same extravagant style, half jest, half earnest; a queer genius—queerer never drew on boots. How different a man, to be sure, from the other; catch *him* talking in this way—Oh no,—he would affect to be greatly shocked at such an exhibition of unsound sentiments, of rebellious, reprehensible feelings—enjoying them, sly dog, all the while, in his sleeve, most amazingly. And yet the one, ac-

according to his own showing, is the most punctual of paymasters, while the other never intends to discharge a solitary obligation so long as lying and impudence can prevent it; so long as a solitary new victim remains to be plucked. Beautiful resolution, glorious plan of life! He'll persist in it, though, most faithfully, and I dare say most successfully, to the last—there *is* a kind of comfort in being fleeced by such a handsome, well dressed, gentlemanly old fellow—who tells such pleasant stories, too, and bon mots, who sings such a capital song, who makes such an unimpeachable salad; the idea of confounding such an artist as this with the vulgar scoundrels of the day—the idea of banishing such talent to Sing Sing—monstrous! How dare you apply to this thorough-bred, delightful performer in the great social drama, such opprobrious epithets as rascal? swindler? thief? fie—fie—fie!

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ANOTHER bright, bracing day—Neighbor —— don't seem to be taking much notice of it though. How he is hurrying down town, to be sure; the same anxious, care-worn countenance as ever. Heaven only knows how many Boards, Meetings, Consulta-

tions, he'll be at between this and sunset; how much advising, scheming, scolding, he'll get through with; talk, talk, talk, what a stream he will pour out; not a moment's peace for tongue or brain; not a moment will he even spare, to let that poor neglected stomach of his scrape acquaintance with a mouthful of victuals. How *does* he stand it?—why, wasn't he in his grave years ago? Well, there are plenty like him in town. It seems to be the order of things in this community; 'tis the spirit of the age; the age of improvement, this; the wonder-working age of Associations and Corporations; the poor old natural man is fast going by the board, fast being swallowed up in the artificial; the good old-fashioned parts of father, son, husband, lover, are fast going out of the drama; at any rate, they are no longer the leading Dram. Pers.; their places have been usurped by Voters, Delegates, Trustees, Directors, Cashiers, Secretaries, and members of all sorts of Societies. Is not this the tendency of things? Are not men fast degenerating into mere machines, mere wheels, big or little, in the great social clock-work, mere spindles in the great social mill? And oh, how that mill keeps going, in this vast metropolis of ours; our whole lives seem to be made up of one incessant stream of Primary Meet-



ings, Committee Meetings, Mass Meetings; one eternal round of all sorts of Conventions; what with Club Rooms, Committee Rooms, Reading Rooms, Lecture Rooms, a poor fellow hardly sees the inside of his own parlor; the dear old fireside is shamefully neglected and dishonored; our wives and daughters are quite cheated out of their just claims upon our hearts. So we go; what with our own, and the business of the public, our brains are kept in one eternal whirl—and what do we gain by it? Knowledge, Health, Happiness? not a bit of it; we manage to pick up a superficial, unsatisfying acquaintance with a host of subjects, but have no clear, deep knowledge of any one. Health, say you?—why, it is getting to be a perfect rarity, to see a downright hearty, robust individual among one's acquaintance; such a set of sallow, attenuated wretches as we are fast becoming; why, there would hardly be a bid for us amongst the anthropophagi; pretty soups and steaks should we make for a respectable Feejee table. Happiness, say you? How can there be any happiness where the affections are not exercised? where a man wilfully alienates himself from the only legitimate objects of those affections? makes himself a stranger to his own household? deliberately sacrifices all the precious smiles

and tears and intercourse of home, for what? a puff in the papers, perhaps, or a hollow vote of thanks, from some board of cunning directors—precious pay, this; beautiful return for a life of slavish, unnatural devotion; and yet, how many are continually enlisting in this hard service; how many hundreds if not thousands are there, in every large city of the land, of these same victims of the Public; the flower of whose youth, the strength of whose riper years, the vigor of whose minds, and the bulk of whose fortunes have been sacrificed upon its cruel altars; nay, who have themselves, in the blindness of their idolatry, offered up wife, children, home, friends, faith, everything. It almost makes one wish that there was no such thing as Public Spirit; makes one sigh for the good old patriarchal days, when men used to sit down and chat together at their leisure, under their vines and fig-trees; when they had time to admire the golden sunsets, and the music of the brooks, and the swaying of the branches, and the bright stars above them; when they were not eternally dancing attendance on telegraphs, living at the mercy of ocean steamers, sighing after Extra Heralds at the all-glorious Falls themselves, discussing vile politics even on the sacred summit of Mount Washington—*then* a man might venture

forth alone, at eventide, to muse and meditate upon his Maker, and himself, the fair scenes of Nature, the deep mysteries of life ; be caught at it NOW, and you are set down at once, either as half-cracked, or else as a disreputable vagabond. It really seems as if men must have had clearer minds and warmer hearts in those days ; as if their piety had been more fervent, their love more deep ; as if all the passions which exalt or degrade our nature, had had more freshness, keenness, intensity ; if men worshipped, they worshipped with all their souls ; if they gave thanks, they did it right heartily ; if they fell to cutting each other's throats, they set about it in downright earnest. What modern battles begin to approach, in horrible carnage, those recorded in Kings or Chronicles ? On the other hand, what modern poet has put one tenth part of the fervor into his songs, that we find pervading and penetrating the Psalms of David ? Hospitality, too, the word meant something in old times ; in this civilized age, has it not degenerated into a mere interchange of cards and formalities ? our Holidays, too ; are not the life and soul fast oozing out of them ? Thanksgiving, to be sure, still " something smacks, something grows to—it has a kind of taste"—but New Year's Day, is it not fast becoming as cold and stately as a Royal

Drawing Room? How infamously we neglect the Birthday of Washington; and even our own National Birthday, how many of us even begrudge *it* a handsome, cordial celebration. We are quite too busy, to throw away our time on mere sentiment; yes, altogether too busy to be either patriots or Christians; too busy for the pleasures of home or the enjoyments of Art; at Church, we are restless and eager for escape; at the concert-room, we gape and are fidgety—even Jenny Lind herself can hardly keep us together unto the end of the programme; at balls and social gatherings we are mute and solemn as if we were at a funeral; this infernal Business it is, that takes the color from our cheeks, the lustre from our eyes—that is fast taking all the heart and soul out of social life. Oh, what a precious consolation, to be told in reply, that we have the honor of living in the most civilized, enlightened, and wonder-working age that the sun ever shone upon; that we are better fed and clad and lodged, and are in every way more comfortable than men ever were before; that even we modest republicans can command ten thousand luxuries which Queens could not, two centuries ago; that we can travel ten times faster, and can send a message ten thousand times sooner, than King Alfred

himself could have done—suppose we can, what then? what trifles, after all, are all these things alongside of good health, good spirits, a cool head, and a heart free from care—we certainly are not anything like so strong or healthy or hearty or merry as were these same contemporaries of England's glorious King, and it would take a pretty able lawyer, I think, to show that we are substantially wiser and better.

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I MET my irritable neighbor ——— again in the street, to-day—oh, what a frenzy he was in. “What is the matter, my dear fellow?” I asked. “Why you are as pale as a ghost—fists clenched, too—what *are* you muttering?” “The infernal scoundrel; how I should like to break every bone in that vile carcass of his.” “*What* scoundrel? *whose* carcass? I see nobody—pray, what *is* the matter? who has provoked you thus?” “Hang him, I don't know *who* he is—I never exchanged a word with him in my life—I don't even know the dog's name.” “What, and wasting all this wrath upon a stranger? fie, fie, how *can* you give way to such feelings?” “Yes, a stranger; but what of that?”

Haven't I met him every day now, for the last five years? Haven't we regularly looked daggers at each other, all that time? Curse his"—"Oh, for shame, man, for shame—is it manly, is it decent, to have no more control over yourself, *thān* this? Besides, why can't you turn your eyes away, when you see the fellow coming?" "I tell you I can't—nor he, either, confound him—there seems to be some infernal fascination about the thing—ther'll be a murder, a murder, I tell you, come out of it yet." "But how absurd, how ungentlemanly." "Oh, you needn't put on that long face—it's mighty easy to preach about these matters. I tell you, I *hate* the puppy, hate him. Ugh—I couldn't sit in the same room with the scoundrel's portrait, even. *Wouldn't* I have it down from the walls, wouldn't my heel be through his vile phiz, in a twinkling. I'm glad I *don't* know the scamp's name—a disgusting one, I dare say—the very sound of it would make me sick—the very sight of it, on a hotel register, of the initials of it on a trunk, would throw me into a fever—ugh!" I saw it was of no use to talk to a man, in this condition—so on I went. What a pity, what a pity, that a poor fellow should be afflicted in this way—that he should be the slave of such a terrible temper, of such

abominable caprices—how silly, how paltry it makes him appear. How many men, now, are there, infinitely inferior to him in all substantial qualities, that yet cut a vastly more respectable figure in the world, simply because they *can* hold the reins, while he cannot—men, too, who having little or no pepper in their own composition, can make no allowance for the frightful preponderance of it in his—phlegmatic, pharisaical wretches, they will even shake their heads, when they hear speak of him—will point him out in the streets to their children, as a terrible example—and yet, there is more real worth, more genuine sensibility in him, than in ten thousand such solemn humbugs. Hang them, when would *they* ever, (as I have known him do, more than once,) get up from their warm beds, to keep a poor drunken brother from freezing to death? catch *them* sitting up, night after night, with a sick, friendless stranger. But this man is perpetually doing such things—yes, this very man, who will fly into such fits of causeless wrath at times, who will rave so absurdly, who will make such a pitiful, and at the same time, ludicrous exhibition of himself, I have reason to know, has been playing the good Samaritan, in this way, almost every night for a month past. Such is the native,

radical kindness of his heart. Oh Lord, what strange inconsistencies in character one is seeing continually, in this inexplicable enigma of a world of ours. I dare say, the other man, who was the occasion of this sudden explosion of temper on ——'s part, is just such another specimen as himself. I have no doubt, that if the two could be fairly brought together, and were to have five minutes' talk and explanation of matters, it would end in their being firm friends for the rest of their lives—but it is altogether unlikely that any such eclairsissement will ever occur. It seems fated that most of us should go through the world without understanding each other—and so, *these* men, who ought to be playing Damon and Pythias, this very moment, will, in all human probability, keep up this same scowling and growling in the street, so long as their powers of locomotion last. Well, well—I can sympathize with them—at least, with the weak part of them. I have just such another temper of my own—no doubt *I* should have got up the same head of steam that —— was under, this morning—at the same short notice too, and with no better reason—nay, did I not, as it was, behave abominably? I did not, to be sure, make a phenomenon of myself, in public, as he did, but I disgraced myself



at home—and all for what? simply, because my tailor disappointed me. Did I not, shame on me, consign his eyes to the lowest pit? Did I not, mentally, discharge at his head an incalculable amount of stones, glass, crockery, boots, boot-jacks, filth of all sorts? Did I not wish him all manner of disasters, by flood and field? a martyr to corns, a victim to pickpockets, a receiver of bad money, left behind by steamboats, his luggage for ever going one way and he the other, caught in perpetual showers, an eternal sipper of cold coffee and sour claret? Yes, every contemptible wish that could enter into the head of a peevish, whimsical, irritable wretch. Such is this beautiful temper of mine, heightened and embellished, no doubt, by being united to such a lovely, vigorous frame as I have the honor of lugging about the earth. It will never be any better, I fear. I see nothing but fuss, scolding, tumult ahead—weak and wrong as it is, to give way so, still, things don't seem to mend with me—I shall keep it up in this style to the last. I foresee that I shall make a most unseemly, discreditable exodus of it. I shall not give up the ghost, like a good Christian, no, not even like a gentleman—I think I see myself, now, cursing the nurses, blowing up the doctors, railing at my medi-

cines, smashing phials, pounding pillows, doing every thing that is disgraceful, and inappropriate—yes, kicking, scolding, scuffling, to the very last verse of the dreary, dismal chapter—what a finale—heigh-ho—heigh-ho!

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'TWAS my destiny, to-day, to sit opposite that horrible old glutton ———, at dinner. Heavens, what an exhibition he made of himself—with what rapidity, energy, inflexibility of purpose, with what awfully destructive results, did he play his part—as to not looking at him, that was quite out of the question. I was completely fascinated, spell-bound by the terrific performance. And to think, that at the end of it all, the old wretch should complain of not having his usual appetite. I thought I should have choked, in the vain attempt to keep my countenance. For more than half a century, now, has this furious trencherman been waging this desolating war against the good things of the earth. Vain, indeed, would it be to ask, frightful, indeed, would it be to discover, how many head of cattle, flocks of sheep, droves of turkeys, flights of minor birds, how many shoals of fish, how many tons of

bread and cheese, how many pipes of wine and ale, have fallen victims, in this sanguinary, this tremendous campaign. And still is the old warrior as eager for the fray as ever—still doth that capacious, that insatiate maw cry out with the horse-leech, give, give, give—still do those faithful grinders ply their ceaseless task. “So was it, when he was a child. So is it, now he is a man.” So will it be, till the great Prince of Gluttons shall pounce upon his victim; when, by the great law of retributive justice, “this desolator desolate, this victor overthrown,” shall himself become a dish. Ah, if this man were to serve his country with one-half the fidelity and zeal that he doth his stomach, what a model patriot our happy land might boast of—or were he to make kindred sacrifices upon the altar of his faith, what a second Luther we should have amongst us to startle and reform this wicked age. Faith, forsooth! the market-place contains the articles of *this* man’s faith; the table is *his* solemn temple; the bill of fare his ritual, and he the most single-minded, the most devout of worshippers. And behold the beautiful results of this devotion. Behold that pot-bellied, crimson-visaged, heavy-eyed mass of flesh and blood—all symmetry of form, all expression of face lost, swallowed up in fat; all

energy of mind, all alacrity of body, all sensibility to the grand or beautiful, quite smothered, buried alive under that bloated, that unwholesome load of flesh ; a conscience, too, that is slumbering on its post ; a soul, torpid almost unto death—unsightly, useless cumberer of the earth—neither fit to live, nor to die—ere long to be huddled into an obscure grave, unwept, unhonored, and unsung. Is *his* a grave to be decked with roses, or to be moistened with the tears of friendship, or of love? Justice forbid. As he soweth, so let him reap ; like a beast hath he elected to live, like a beast, then, let him perish ; else what meaning, what value were there in the laurels that clasp the patriot's brow, in the monuments we raise to long-suffering virtue? Still, this gross epicure, this miserable devotee to flesh and sense, is my brother ; ought I not, then, to sympathize with him, to weep over him, to do all I can to reclaim him, instead of sneering at or frowning upon him? Heaven only knows the power of the temptations that have thus overcome him—knows what strange, sad peculiarities of temperament he may have inherited. Rebuke him not, then, but aid him to return to the true path—urge him by every possible motive to abandon this lamentable, this soul-starving, body-stuffing career.

True, true—but is the attempt a practicable one? Is it so easy a thing to break these iron chains of habit? Pray, how are you to get *at* that soul, all the avenues to which are thus obstructed, blocked up? Is it not hopelessly benighted, incarcerated in that vast prison-house of flesh? What tones of truth or wisdom can penetrate those thick walls of sense? What, save the liberating hand of death, can ever let in the glorious light of day upon that unhappy captive? Alas! if it be so, indeed—meanwhile, let me look to my own life; let me purify my own heart, chastise my own appetites, frown down rebellious and unholy thoughts—let my conscience be ever on the alert, an unsleeping sentinel, ever ready to sound the alarm to virtue; so may I hope to escape those rocks on which my poor erring brother seems likely to perish.

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HAD a call this morning from my friend ———. He was as hearty, cordial, enthusiastic as ever. He had been to hear Jenny Lind last night. How he did go on about her, to be sure! How he did fling the epithets about! “Such a voice—such a woman; you *must* go, my dear fellow—you must

not throw away this glorious opportunity." I told him I thought it would be unwise for a sickly, delicate man like me to stem such a crowd, to expose myself to any such violent excitements. "Don't be alarmed about that; I'll see that a good seat is secured for you. Go you must; you never heard such singing. There never was, there never will be anything like it, this side Heaven." And so he went on. He is always in the same gale of excitement; 'twas so when Ole Bull was here. I remember going with him to one or two of his concerts. How completely carried away he was—such applause; never were two hands knocked together with such fervor before. If he had had as many as Briareus, 'twould have been all the same; the whole fifty pair would have been going together, with the same vehement energy. Gabriel Ravel was another of his weaknesses. He seemed to get perfectly beside himself with laughter and wonder at the jokes and the feats of that prince of fun, that amazing Acrobat. He has at times manifested these feelings to such a degree, that loud cries of order, order, put him out, have been the consequence. Poor fellow! he was utterly unconscious, that while rendering this generous, this overflowing tribute of admiration to genius, he himself had

all at once become the prominent performer in the scene. It may readily be imagined how such a man would behave on the Rhigi, or at Chamouni, or Niagara, or any of those great headquarters of the sublime and beautiful in nature. Ah! 'tis delightful to see such heartiness, such enthusiasm. It must be confessed, though, that it is not always expended upon scenes or artists that have such a legitimate claim upon it as the above; my friend's judgment is by no means so good as his heart; oh, no; he has made some terrible mistakes in his day. His love of novelty, his hankering after new sources of excitement, have played the mischief with him, at times; he certainly has been severely bitten by some most atrocious humbugs. What a dance mesmerism led him, for instance; how many trashy books has he bought, how many gatherings has he attended, how many vile impostors have had him by the button, in connection with this subject, for the last five years; all that time has he been on the lookout for amazing developments, as he calls them, for astounding spiritual discoveries; they have not come along yet—they never *will* come; he himself begins at last to think so, begins to feel that the whole thing is essentially a swindle—not an unmitigated swindle, perhaps; no doubt, in

all this chasing after wonders, this hunting after miracles, some valuable facts have been laid hold of, some few precious grains of truth have been added to the Treasury of Knowledge; still, who is not convinced that the whole system, as now paraded before the world, is substantially a humbug, founded in fraud, kept up by impudence, nourished by credulity? Hydropathy, too, with what earnestness he took hold of that subject, with what zeal did he expend his praises and his pence, in its behalf—what floods of eloquence has he poured out upon it—and what does it amount to? Has any really new and valuable information been communicated to the world? the idea that men have been in possession of the element for thousands and thousands of years, using it all the time, too, drinking it, diving and dabbling in it, in every conceivable way, and yet, till now, have been profoundly ignorant of its true virtues and offices—who's going to believe any such monstrous statement as this? the idea that water is going to revolutionize all medical science—that the whole *Materia Medica* is to be swept out of the way, in this summary style, poh! Why, what did the Lord give us all these herbs, and roots, and earths, and salts, and minerals for? What are we going to do with them? Nay,



what an insult this theory is, to the great Physician himself, who, with his own kind hands, hath mixed our medicines for us, and hath caused them to spring out of the earth, in copious fountains, and in pleasant places, surrounding them with healthful airs and charming scenery, as if expressly inviting, urging his children to come, and drink, and be cured—why, every mineral spring gives the lie to such atrocious pretensions. ——— himself begins to take this view of the subject, begins at least to admit that there is a large infusion of quackery in the system—'tis his way—he is ever ready to recant, on cause shown—ever open to conviction—'tis delightful indeed, the amiable, cordial way in which he acknowledges his errors. Oh, how different from most enthusiasts—as a general thing, what a conceited, petulant, overbearing, domineering set they are; more so than ever, it would seem, in this enlightened age and land of ours—how many are there of these same pestilent fellows, in this very community; most provoking, most inconsistent of mortals. Bigoted Radicals, persecuting reformers, tyrannical advocates of liberty, men who are for ever prating about truth, progress, principle, freedom of opinion—and yet who are ready to fly into a fever, if you take the

liberty of having an opinion of your own—whose whole lives betray the hollowness of their pretensions—who only want the authority, to be just as great despots, to be just as ready to chop off the heads of their opponents, as ever Persian Sophi was, or Arabian Caliph—he is no such man—no, indeed—he is as kind-hearted as he is impulsive; whether you agree with him, or disagree with him, he is the same excellent friend, the same hearty, genial, glorious fellow. Ah dear me—I shall never forget one absurd scrape that this sanguine, go-ahead disposition of his got him into; 'twas at a time, when balloon ascensions were much more common than they are now. ——— had long entertained the notion, that a little voyage of this kind would be alike agreeable and instructive—he confessed, he had an ardent longing to see how our old Alma Mater of an earth looked, from that position—in fact, the novelty and excitement of the thing were quite irresistible—so he made his arrangements with ———, the aeronaut to be his companion in his next air-trip—to keep the affair quiet, no announcement was made in the bills to that effect—unluckily, or rather, most luckily, his friends got wind of the thing, but only a short hour or two before the starward journey was to come off—they

were greatly shocked, of course—the idea of his periling *his* valuable life, in this visionary way—it must not be—no, no—to be sure, no man was better prepared, no man fitter for heaven, so far as mere human merits were concerned—no doubt he *would* make an admirable, useful, influential angel, an ornament to the heavenly courts—but he couldn't be spared, yet awhile, he was making altogether too many of his friends happy on earth—there were plenty that *might* go, if they chose—*then*, if the parachute were not disposed to do its duty, or if the bag itself *should* take a notion to burst, they could be resigned to the result—society would probably be a gainer by the transaction. But there was no time for reflections like these—this thing must be prevented—there was not a moment to be lost—where *was* the man? Nobody could find him—as to laying violent hands upon him, at the very last moment, that would never do—a man of his ardent temperament, too—the crowd would no doubt side with him, in the matter—it might end in a most disgraceful row. Ah yes—we have it—swear an assault and battery on him—get out a warrant instanter, and let an officer post down to the Garden with it, forthwith—no sooner said than done—away went the man of law—he ar-

rived in the very nick of time. ——— had absolutely got one leg over the basket, when the words, I have a warrant for you, struck his astounded ear—it must have been a rich scene, that—what, with the bustling movement and eager inquiries of the crowd, *his* look of mingled amazement and indignation, the mute wonder of the aeronaut, and the beautifully imperturbable deportment of the deputy, the earnest remonstrance of the disappointed voyager, his tardy recognition of the supremacy of the law, his final exit under the wing of the officer, amidst the cheers and jeers of the multitude, altogether, the thing must have been intensely dramatic—no man appreciated more thoroughly than he did the absurdity of the whole transaction, when it was once fairly explained to him, and even now, if any allusion is made to it, he will crow like a cock, for a good half hour. Well, he'll never change, I suppose—he'll keep the pot boiling in the same lively way, to the close—ever keeping a bright lookout for the novelties of the day, ever ready to go all lengths for any scheme that promises to benefit the condition of his brethren, be it sound, or be it plausible. And when he goes, surely, no spirit will ever have left the earth, more thoroughly alive to the wonders and glories in store

for it, more thoroughly disposed to render all happy about it, in whatever sphere it may be called upon to act.

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So old —— is dead at last—after reeling and cursing about the earth, for the last five-and-twenty years, he is now quietly under it—yes, he is now put to bed for good—not a tear, not a prayer, not a solitary friend followed him to his miserable grave. Poor, worthless wretch—if from the body of the fair and pure Ophelia, love bade sweet violets spring, oh, what vile nettles, what unsavory weeds, must needs start forth from thy loathsome and unsightly carcass. Truly, the air seems to be sweeter, the skies brighter, since the removal of this nuisance—there seems to be one monster the less for dogs to bark at, for little children to be frightened at. And to think, that this poor creature was once a fine, spirited fellow, with a handsome, ingenuous countenance, with good talents, bright prospects, with every inducement under heaven to keep straight, and to make himself useful and respectable; and that he should thus wilfully have thrown himself away, have

turned himself into a perfect torment to all about him ; have become the theme of alternate mockery and pity to the whole neighborhood ; and at last have wound up his career in this frightful, ignominious manner ; to think, too, how many millions have done the very same thing before him ; how many are doing it now ; how many, alas, will do it, even to the very crack of doom ! Oh, is it not frightful ? Why *does* the Lord permit these things ? Why does he not rise in his anger, and extirpate, at once and for ever, from the earth, this curse, this enemy of our race ? What *other* enemy is to be named with it ? What are all the mischiefs that have befallen man, through war, famine, pestilence, shipwreck, murder, through all other causes put together, compared with the daily, universal, crushing conquests of this Arch-Destroyer ?—Nay, what are even *its* open, notorious victories over human life and happiness, compared with the incalculable amount of secret wretchedness that it is for ever working in the world ? Oh how many, many are there, who, while never positively exposing, disgracing, ruining themselves, are yet secretly cherishing this viper in their bosoms ; are clouding their faculties, injuring their good looks, souring their tempers, embittering and shortening their days,

for ever manufacturing troubles at the same time that they are disqualifying themselves to meet the real troubles of life, cheating themselves out of all wholesome pleasures, not making one hundredth part out of the world that they might, either in the way of duty or of enjoyment. Oh what infatuation, what frightful wasting of one's powers, and one's privileges!—yet, what multitudes are continually throwing away their lives thus—it makes one shudder to think of it. Rum, however, was not the immediate instrument of this poor wretch's death, but chloroform; he resorted to it, of course, for the express purpose of putting himself out of the way, in the easiest and pleasantest manner possible—yes, in this pitiful, cowardly manner did he sneak out of life—perverting Heaven's kind gift to his own vile purposes. The last sentiment that he was heard to give utterance to, and that with a round oath, was one of utter disbelief in a future state. Glorious farewell speech—beautiful leave-taking, to be sure!—that he was any more sincere than sober, when he made it, is quite unlikely; it was, more probably, a kind of whistling by way of keeping up his courage—for, perverted as his faculties all were, he surely could not have had the insolence and folly to expect any such snug and comfortable

termination to his career as this. What, man, after spending the better part of your life in the service of Rum; after breaking all the laws of God and man; trampling on everything holy and lovely; outraging the feelings of your family and friends; daily brutifying your own nature,—after all this, have you the face to say, that nothing now remains but to lie down, and take a sweet, dreamless, endless sleep? Have you the impudence to hope, that by means of so cheap and paltry a dodge as chloroform, forsooth, or prussic acid, you may be able to give the slip, alike to the pangs of Death, and to the terrors of Retribution? oh, no, no, no—there is no need of quoting Scripture on the occasion. Common sense and common justice rise simultaneously from their seats and protest aloud against any such monstrous assumption, and insist upon it, that condign punishment must and shall be inflicted upon so vile a sinner as this—the nature and duration of that punishment, it is not for us poor, erring brother mortals to know—but that come it will, who does not feel it in his very bones? else were life a sorry, dreary farce indeed, and *human* laws a cruel mockery. Yes, ere now, perhaps, has this poor soul commenced its long career of suffering—released, at last, from that diseased body, that heat-oppressed



brain, hath it not already acquired a vigor and capacity, unknown to Earth? Is not Conscience already upon its feet, never more to be overthrown or trampled on? Hath not Memory already secured in her grasp every fragment of the past, never more to be wrested from her? Hath not Reason gained a far loftier throne, from which she can never more be deposed? And must these enlarged capacities, these sharpened perceptions, be ceaselessly directed upon self? Is there no running away from consciousness, no evasion? no skulking behind sleep, or ether? no refuge in the bowl? What horrible condition of soul is this, when its every faculty is thus turned into a minister of vengeance against itself—when every recollection is a piercing arrow, every thought a sentence of death, every vision of the imagination is full of armed and angry spectres. What hell more dreadful could bigot invent, or sinner suffer, than this. It might, perhaps, have been with reference to physical torments, that this poor besotted wretch tried so hard to find comfort in the idea of annihilation—but oh, what are physical sufferings, compared with these? and how long are they to last? for ever and ever? the thought is too horrible—it cannot be—no, deep and bitter as needs must be the

draught which the poor sinner is compelled to take, surely, surely there is a drop of hope lingering at the bottom of the cup. Surely there is a final day of redemption, and of happiness. Meanwhile, God have mercy on his wretched, but justly suffering soul !

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A FEW short hours since, and the eighteen hundred and fiftieth volume of the new series of Time's Earthly Works was finished, and deposited by the Recording Angel in the archives of Heaven. And already is that most diligent, most truthful of historians hard at work upon the next. Oh, what endless, yet what vain and idle speculations are suggested to the imagination by this thought ! Who is this heavenly compiler ? What associates hath he, in his unceasing labors ? From what point of space doth he survey this restless ball of ours ? On what mysterious leaves, with what magic pen, in what unknown language are his records inscribed ? Where is the celestial Library, whose alcoves contain these innumerable, these all-revealing histories ? And are *all* the transactions of Earth here faithfully depicted, be they great or small,

public or private, Christian or Pagan? Does the same volume that recites the virtues of a Washington, take note of the humble, unlettered goodness that lies hid in some secluded mountain dell, or that praises God in some far-off log-house of the wilderness? The same historian that lays bare the deep, the Titanic wickedness of a Napoleon, does he also duly mark and brand the petty villanies of every low-browed scoundrel of St. Giles's? Is the same page, perhaps, whereon are inscribed the sweet hymns and prayers of childhood, stained with the ribald blasphemies of some foul nest of pirates? Is nothing lost, then? What, are all the burning words of orators, the passionate outpourings of lovers, the brilliant sallies of wits, the drowsy speeches of legislators, the quibbles of special pleaders, the mocks of wicked, and the groans of dying men, are they all treasured up in these authentic histories? Is it to no purpose, then, that we destroy our ill-considered writings, take back our hasty words, suppress our evil thoughts? Do they still live, and are they to be published against us? Horrible, horrible! *When*, then, oh when are these mysterious, these terrible details to be disclosed? Is it to be on some grand day of audience and of judgment, before all the assembled

souls of the children of men? or does each one of us, immediately on leaving earth, hear and receive, according to the deeds done in the body? And oh, what is to be our portion, when confronted with and judged by these not-to-be-questioned records? Where is this heaven, or this hell that awaits us? In what part of the boundless realms of space? These other planets of our system, too, are they also inhabited by moral and accountable beings, whose daily thoughts, words, and deeds are thus transcribed for purposes of judgment? Are all these systems of the universe but so many expansions of the same great scheme of discipline? or are certain portions of creation set apart as theatres where the great drama of probation is for ever enacted, and others selected for the wonderful realities of retribution? Which of those two sparkling stars, then, is the abode of the just made perfect, and which the eternal residence of the lost? Or is there no eternal residence for the soul? and are all these worlds so many points at which we commence, or stages through which we pass, in the progress of a journey that knows no end? Ah, dear! who hath not asked, who is not continually asking these questions?—so natural, and at the same time so terrible; so familiar to the mind,

and yet so utterly inexplicable? Revelation certainly does not condescend to answer them, save in the merest generalities, and Nature's voice returns but vague and indistinct mutterings; the hints that Science furnishes, sublime as they may be, yet are they not far more calculated to bewilder, appal, overwhelm us, than to inspire or yield us comfort? what a withering, blighting sense of insignificance seems to attach to Earth and earthly things. Virtue itself loses heart and is afraid lest, in the mysterious arrangements of God, it should be overlooked—cheated out of its future existence. Vice becomes more hardened and reckless than ever, as if it felt sure, through its very littleness, of slipping through the fingers of Almighty Justice. Reputation hardly rises to the dignity of a bubble, and Fame, alas, the loudest blast of her trumpet sinks into the faintest echo of the feeblest whisper—"the great globe itself, yea, all which it inherit" scarcely seems to be an appreciable quantity in the universe, and no more to be missed, were it suddenly plucked out of creation, than a berry would be from a bush, an apple from a crowded tree. But oh, *can* this be the true view of ourselves, or of our position in the vast scale of being?—no, no—we are not such obscure, such insignificant creatures in God's eyes;

this dear earth of ours—has not heavenly wisdom contrived it, planted and watered it, filled it with life and beauty, endowed it with light and motion, subjected it to wondrous laws, prescribed for it a glorious pathway in the skies, entrusted it to guardian angels, nay, assigned to it this same celestial overseer and historian, whose labors know no pause, whose records cannot err? Surely some great end is contemplated in all these wondrous plans. *Can* that be so very paltry and worthless an object, on which so much thought and care and kindness have been expended? Not only do mortified pride and alarmed vanity, but reason and good sense also, remonstrate, protest against this belittling view of man, and his relations to his Maker; this view, which so discourages all that is excellent, and arouses all that is diabolical within us. But oh, how much more potent and triumphant is the voice of Christianity on this subject! “What, *they* of no account in his eyes, to whom God has given, not only so many good things, and noble faculties, but so many special messengers also, fraught with glad tidings and solemn warnings and precious promises?—nay, who hath himself come down from Heaven to visit and enlighten and redeem them?” Happy the man, who can ask this question in good

faith—who is not shamming in this matter, who is not merely acquiescing in these truths, but in his very heart and soul adopts them, and manfully acts up to them. If these things be so, indeed, what a delightful position he occupies; if they *should* turn out to be an illusion, still what a charming, glorious illusion—an illusion that tends alike to cheer the heart and mend the life, to make a man a blessing to those about him, an ornament to his race, who wouldn't cherish it? But, to look at this matter again, as a poor natural man, is there, after all, in the phenomena which Science discloses or suggests, anything to force us to take such frightfully humble ground, and to make us out such a contemptible portion of creation? If mere bulk, indeed, is to be the measure of value, our little planet must certainly cut a pretty sorry figure in the skies, alongside of its unwieldy brethren Jupiter and Saturn, for instance. But may we not have the advantage of them both, in matters of far more consequence? As in the earth itself, there are favored tracts, alike removed from the heat of the equator and the polar cold, in which alone are to be found the highest manifestations of beauty, the rarest exhibitions of intellect, may it not be the same thing in the system? may we not have a far more felicitous position in

that system, for the development of physical and intellectual excellence, than either the inhabitants of Mars or Venus, or than those of the greater and more distant planets? may not our little orb, after all, then, be far more precious in the eyes of its Maker than its huge brethren? may not our little selves, with all our crimes and follies, be far nobler products of Divine Wisdom, than their inhabitants—a race, for aught we know, of clumsy, feeble-witted, malignant giants? Why not take comfort in *that* thought, as well as be cowed down by the opposite? May not conjecture, poor, wandering child of ignorance, be allowed to stray in one direction as well as another? But, after all, why indulge at all in such vain and unprofitable conjectures? Are they not quite too much, even for the strongest nerves, the clearest heads, the purest hearts? What right, then, have I, poor, frail, feeble, ignorant sinner that I am, to try to fathom these awful depths, to puzzle my poor brains with these bewildering speculations? Better, far better, confine myself to the humble sphere of duty assigned me, to do all I can, in my small way, towards making this earth of ours, or at least the little corner of it in which I am called to act, more worthy of the Great Founder—more comfortable, and beautiful,



and enlightened, and happy—the home of peace and good will—and to leave it, at last, not in a murmuring, struggling, rebellious spirit, but calmly and hopefully awaiting the great mysteries of the future.—

“Hope humbly, then, on trembling pinions soar,  
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.”

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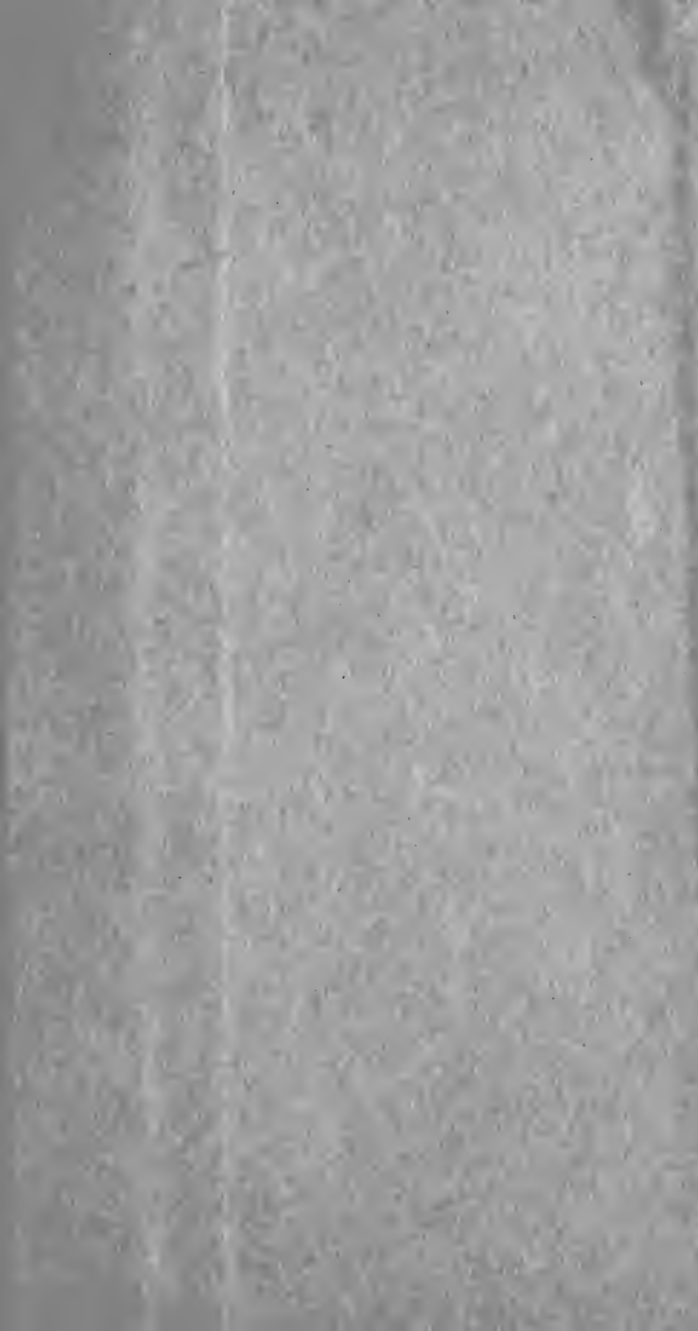
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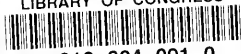








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